

Blessings From Behind the Scenes

As soon as Georgan Ewart steps foot on the grounds at Cedarly Pastors Retreat in Delafield, Wisconsin, she feels a change in the atmosphere.

“It’s a sacred place,” she says, “and you don’t find those much anymore.”

Many prayers have been said over Cedarly’s grounds. Just knowing that pastors come there every week to pray together is powerful and inspiring, Georgan says.

She should know. Georgan is intimately involved in the workings of Cedarly, even though she hasn’t visited as a pastor or spouse. Instead, she has been blessed to assist behind the scenes.

WITNESSING THE IMPACT

Georgan became acquainted with Pastors Retreat Network through her volunteer work. Eager to pitch in around her community, and having just retired, Georgan began spending time in the kitchen at Cedarly five years ago. Through assisting with the meal preparation and serving, she gained a clear view of the ministry’s inner-workings.

“From the kitchen, you can hear the pastors throwing their heads back in laughter or crying together or engaging in very serious conversations,” she says. She thinks fondly of how appreciative the guests are for each gesture of

hospitality. “They are genuinely grateful” for the time of rest.

Small-church pastors linger most poignantly in Georgan’s memory.

“They may have a congregation of 100 or so, but they are probably handling the work all on their own,” she says. “They say the average work week is 40 hours, but I don’t think the small-church pastor’s has ever been [that low].”

She’s witnessed how pastors find solace at the retreats—away from directing the choir, visiting the sick, organizing activities and conducting other pastoral responsibilities. On retreat, they can focus on their own hearts, their spouse and God.

ENCOURAGING THROUGH PRAYER

Not being a pastor herself, Georgan takes part in other important ways.

Along with the women in her Bible study, Georgan writes prayer cards for the retreat guests.

“The cards are a way of encouraging guests and letting them know we’re praying for them,” she says. “I encourage them to enjoy this time to reconnect as a couple,” she says.

“Many times pastors and spouses have to go in two separate directions when it comes to church work, but the retreat gives them time to really be with each other.”



Georgan Ewart

She hopes the cards bolster the spirits of the guests, and the feedback she receives is one indication they do just that.

“A lot of times, we’ll get thank-you cards from the pastors, saying they were blessed or found peace,” she says. Reading their words inspires her with more detailed ways to pray for the next guest.

CHANGING FROM THE INSIDE

Georgan’s Protestant background has provided strong Biblical teaching, but her first-hand glimpses of pastors’ growth have encouraged her to learn and discover even more about her faith.

She has read many of the books Pastors Retreat Network recommends to pastors during their retreats and has seen up-close how a mixture of

sources gives a “richness” to the retreat experiences.

Through her readings and observations, she’s gained an intimate knowledge of spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, prayer, silence and solitude, and frugality. Where her spiritual background had influenced her to view these disciplines as alternatives to grace—or a way to gain salvation—she’s now convinced that “they are there to help.”

The disciplines now permeate Georgan’s daily life. For example, one month she fasted every Tuesday. The fasting, she says, made a dramatic impact in the effectiveness of her regular Tuesday-night women’s small group. Through fasting, she felt “less anxious, more tuned into Godliness, more connected to God and more apt to listen.”

Spiritual disciplines make it easier to walk away from unhealthy passions—whether a lust after food or something else, Georgan says. She has personally experienced the liberation that comes from separating herself from things that try to subtly gain control. As a result, her faith has grown deeper.

Scripture reading is another way Georgan is connecting more intimately to her faith. She now incorporates prayer during her reading.



“When I pray through the scriptures I’m reading, I am more apt to recognize things that need to change, things I need to thank God for and things I need to apply to my life,” she says.

FRUGALITY LEADS TO GREATER GENEROSITY

In addition to fasting and prayer, Georgan has been embracing frugality. This act of discipline is one that Georgan is certain God can use to express His generosity.

Georgan says she has “seen what God can do.” When she and her husband were forced to tighten their budget in 2005, it threatened to reduce their giving. As Georgan looked at her spending, and God showed her ways to economize, she found that she and her husband could

be generous and their needs continued to be met. God made a way for them to give as they felt led. There were no shortfalls—God made up the difference!

“I thought I was already a frugal person,” she says. “Come to find out, there have been many opportunities to be truly frugal.”

Through exercising frugality, she’s gotten “in touch with what is truly a necessity versus what is nice to have.”

“God continues to make ways to have enough and still have more to share—it’s like He is stretching whatever we have,” she says. Through it all, Georgan says “I have felt neither deprived nor stingy.”

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

Georgan continues to study and learn to be open and obedient to God. She recognizes that her “natural habits are difficult to overcome.” Through it all, her genuine heart of humility and servitude radiates God’s love.

Georgan has both seen and experienced new life through Pastors Retreat Network. What started as behind-the-scenes observation from the Cedarly kitchen progressed into prayerful support and ultimately into a true life transformation around me.” 🌸

WHAT PASTORS RETREAT NETWORK MEANS TO ME

➤ “Pastors Retreat Network has been a big blessing in my life. This has been so enriching personally—to see God in new ways!”

—Georgan Ewart