

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010

## Mission Tuesday #46



What do people and sloppy joes have in common? Read on and I'll tell you.

Each Tuesday for the last 46 weeks, I have been helping out at Mission of Hope. I'm now also there on Thursdays. Each time I'm there, I get to experience something new. I get to experience helping others in different ways...listening, making a meal, helping get a bag of groceries or emergency clothing, serving a cup of coffee, offering a smile, a hug, etc. I get to experience forgetting about myself and giving what I have to help others. I get to experience hearing life stories of people who may be forgotten in this society, but yet who have become my friends. I get to create friendships with people I may never have met through any other way.

I am grateful for Mission of Hope, and for how God has grown me and changed my heart towards people in general, from my involvement there. I'm grateful that Mission of Hope is my family's church, and I'm proud to represent Mission of Hope in the things I do. God is actively at work there, and I'm excited to be a part of it all!

Yesterday I was filled with such joy being at the Mission. Phyllis and I arrived early, we prayed together for the day, asking God to guide us through it, and for Him to give us His love for the people we were going to serve throughout the day. That started our day in the best way possible!

Driving in earlier though, I was a bit panicked. I was going to be the only one in the kitchen for all I knew, and we were on the schedule to prepare lunch. I kept thinking, "I can't make lunch for 150 on my own!" When the kids and I prayed before getting them

to school, I prayed that God would bring people to help me in the kitchen. I will still be uneasy though, even after Phyllis and I prayed.

Laurel arrived at the front door a few minutes after 9am. I thanked God immediately for her being there. Tom had set out chili in bags to be put into roasters for lunch. (That was so helpful, knowing we didn't have to come up with something from scratch in the morning.) I began putting the chili, or what I thought was chili, in the roasters.

After I got the first two bags opened and in the roasters, I soon realized that what I put in there wasn't chili...it was sloppy joes. The other four bags, yet to open were chili. Four bags of chili weren't going to feed 150 people! What were we going to do? A roaster of sloppy joes and a roaster of chili? That wasn't going to work. So Tom and I decided to make the sloppy joes into chili! We added lots of chili powder, some cayenne pepper, lots of chili beans and chili style pinto beans to the sloppy joes. We also added a bag of the regular chili, extra tomato sauce, and made two roasters into three.

In the meantime, Betty came in to help. (Thank God! I don't think there was ever a moment that I was more happy to see her!) And she brought in a friend with her. I believe her name was Corine. Another woman, Jenny, came up and asked if she could help. Yes! So Laurel, Betty, Corine, Jenny and I worked at getting the food donations into the refrigerator and freezer, making lunch and getting everything set up for noon...when lunch would be served.

After letting the chili cook awhile, it still smelled to me like sloppy joes. We added pepper and onions. I prayed that God would turn it into chili. :) And He did! He also provided servers to serve lunch...Ormal volunteered to help, and Susan, who works down the street, came in to help serve lunch. Tom, Phyllis and I each tried a bowl of the chili...and I have to say it was very tasty! It had a small sweet tang to it at first, then that taste was followed up with a spicy bite from the chili pepper and the cayenne pepper! Many people commented on how good the chili was, as Tom, Phyllis and I smiled. Thank you Lord! :)

Yesterday was another good lesson for me in trusting God. I prayed in the morning,

asking God to bring people to help me in the kitchen...yet, I was uneasy and nervous that I was going to be on my own to make a meal for 150. I should have trusted Him to provide what I needed...and beyond, as He brought extra people to help serve lunch as well! When will I learn that God doesn't do things "half-way?"

Phyllis and I also prayed that God would guide us through the day. But yet, I panicked as the sloppy joes were cooking in the roaster, and worrying if it was going to taste like sloppy joes or chili after we were done "doctoring" it up. I shouldn't have been surprised when I heard the comment from someone, "This is the best chili I've ever had!" Not from my doing, but from God's! :) Why wouldn't He give the best...He always does.

Lessons through people and sloppy joes...I never know what God is going to use to teach me and grow me, but when I'm at Mission of Hope, He always finds a way, often in ways I don't expect, to do so!