

## We Endure This For...

By Adam McLane Everyone I know in ministry deals with a similar feeling from time to time. Futility. There is so much work to do and too few people, too little time, and too little resources to do it all.

Futility knows no size limit. It is felt in the smallest churches across rural Iowa, to the largest megachurch campuses, to my own ministry experience. In each situation we encounter this formula:

Not enough people + Not enough time + Not enough money = Why bother trying?

Even in the most positive ministry blogs you will occasionally see the author struggle through futility. "We had 120 people come to Jesus yesterday, there are so many more to be reached!" While we worship an infinite God who gives his people infinite potential to minister, there is also a seemingly infinite amount of work to do, people to reach, and opportunities to express the Gospel.

Bringing it closer to home, now. Many of us sit in staff meetings, go to session meetings, attend denominational conferences, deal with unpleaseable parents, unyielding selfish youth, budgeting, insurance brokers who don't get ministry, and more politics than you signed up for. All this and you quietly serve your church. Without anyone noticing, you stack chairs, clean bathrooms, fuel up the vans, wash dishes, and attend swim meets. Are we in the same boat yet? We all do the same stuff!

So, why do we do this thing?

- leftover pizza?
- a salary that just got smaller?
- a position of high regard in the community?
- fame?

Firstly, we endure it for Jesus. Let's not forget that nor roll our eyes and call that a cliché. Let's also not devalue the cross by comparing the crap we deal with from day-to-day to what Jesus endured to buy us the ability to do so. In comparison, what we endure is nothing. In fact, our endurance of those things and overcoming the urge to compare in light of all that He has done for us proves the opposite. We don't give up because the cause is righteous and the job is noble. It is an honor to be in the service of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Even to wash dishes and stack chairs is an honor for such a High King.

"However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." Acts 20:24

Second, we endure this for the people. Let's be real. You could probably do fine working at a bank or managing an

insurance agency. If you can be a youth pastor you can do a lot of things at a high capacity with almost no supervision. But you were called to serve God's kids instead. Most adults flee spending time with adolescents. Yet God uniquely gifted you to love them. Your ability to endure the thankless parts of your job sends a powerful message to the people in your ministry. You don't just exhort them to serve others, you live it every day.

"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." James 5:11

You endure it for the kids. You endure it for the parents. You endure it because you believe your efforts make a difference.

I can't speak on behalf of the people in your ministry. But I can say this; thank you for enduring for the people. Thank you for enduring staff meetings for the people. Thank you for enduring your boss for the people. Thank you for enduring other staff who just don't get you. Thanks for eating crappy pizza. Thanks for enduring those session meetings dedicated to the stain your game left on the Jones Memorial Carpet. Thanks for enduring it all. And be reminded, you do it for God and you do it for the people.