A Prayer, a Van, and Two Pies

When Ruth Nelson prayed for an answer, she heard God’s response through an unexpected opened door: a Facebook post.

In past years, when Nelson Baptist Church needed to use a van, they borrowed one from the Dan River Baptist Association, which required availability and reservations far in advance. Ruth used the van to deliver meals to the Ronald McDonald House in Durham with her Girls in Action group, but she felt convicted that the church should own a van so that their ministry could be ongoing without the risk of not having transportation.

Last November, Ruth shared her idea with church members. At first, the church wanted to table the request but then appointed her chair of the new van committee.

She immediately began scouring “vans for sale” ads, looking for vans on her days off. “God led me to many car lots but never to the right van,” she said.

In January, Ruth posted to Facebook that her church was looking to buy a used van to assist with their ministries. Tony Brooks, BGAV Field Strategist, Southside Region, saw her post. Tony shared her post on the website and quickly got a response.

Bill Wilkerson, Tommy Cromer, and Jim Wilkerson of Crewe Baptist Church stand in front of the van their church donated to Nelson Baptist Church, along with two homemade pies received as “payment.”
“Alden Hicks, retired Director of Missions, Southside Baptist Association, saw the post and called to let me know that Crewe Baptist wanted to give away a van to a church who could use it,” he said.

Alden had spoken with church member, Bill Wilkerson, about the van, sharing with Tony that the church had only two stipulations for donating the van: 1) that the Crewe Baptist Church name be removed from the vehicle and 2) that it would be used specifically for ministry. Tony passed this information on to Ruth, who was delighted to honor Crewe’s requirements.

Upon confirmation that the van was in great condition and that she was coming to pick it up, Ruth asked Bill what she could give the church in return. They asked for no payment, but Bill said, “Well, I like chocolate pie. And so does my brother.” Ruth enlisted her mother-in-law and a friend to make those pies.

A few days later, the parties involved made a wonderful transaction: two homemade chocolate pies for a church van that would enable ministry to continue.

Reflecting on the experience, Ruth said, “When God gives you a gift, you use it!”

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