



October 2007

Pack Your Purse with SERVANTHOOD

Feature: “Switch the Bag” Supper

Ask a woman who has the gift of being a hostess if she would be willing to have the Alliance Women meet in her home for a bag supper. This can be especially effective if she is not a woman who regularly attends Alliance Women meetings, because it will give her an opportunity to exercise her gift of service while at the same time experiencing the positive impact of this ministry. As an illustration of serving one another, ask each woman to bring a bag supper, but with the knowledge that she will be giving her bag to one of her sisters rather than eating it herself. After everyone arrives at the home, ask the women to “switch their supper” with someone else, and enjoy a time of fellowship together as you share your gifts of food. For extra fun, ask the women to decorate the paper bags they bring, and give a prize for the most creative!

Outreach Idea:

Contact a school in your community that teaches special needs children. Find out from their staff what supplies they need help with. Ideas may include chap stick, cotton swabs, petroleum jelly, band-aids, baby wipes and diapers. Invite the teachers to join you at your next event and let them know if your church has any children's events coming up that their students would enjoy.

Prayer Tip:

Psalm 33: 1-5

"Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love."

Praise is prayer too!

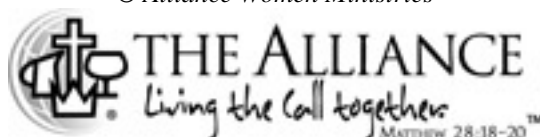
Psalm 9:11

"Sing praises to the Lord enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done."

Discipleship Thought:

John said, “He must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30). We too must not promote ourselves, but instead let us promote Christ.

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Good to Go in East Germany

By Shelly Kragt

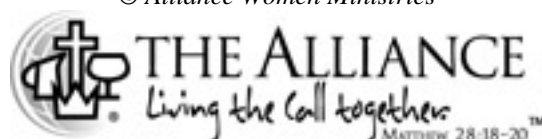
Birthdays are a big deal in Germany. Not only does the birthday boy or girl receive countless cards and phone calls, but they are also responsible to plan and host their own party. It sounds like a lot of work, and it is, but a birthday is something to be celebrated, especially with close friends and family. Because we are an American family – a rarity in the former communist East – we have been invited to many birthday celebrations. After several invitations, it became obvious that we were not just new friends or acquaintances, but also a status symbol. Even though the rigid communist government has fallen, they still have a strong desire to be different from others in some way. But it doesn't matter to us. We use every opportunity we can get to meet people, to meet their friends and to build relationships, because where we live in Berlin, no one would care about hearing about God without a relationship first.

Being invited to birthday parties is just one way God has used to introduce us to the people of this predominate atheistic society. One of the first questions people ask us is why we are here. It is the perfect open door for a conversation about God. Responses are always varied and we may never see them again in our lives, but we have at least planted a seed and been faithful to what God has called us to do here.

Shortly after the fall of the wall in Berlin, a poll was taken in Eastern Europe to evaluate the religious condition of those countries. East Germany ranked highest, at 90%, as the most atheistic country. God was erased from this society. Of course, there are still churches and a remnant of true believers, but very few. The people that we have talked to and met have believed the lie that man is the ultimate good and that truth is found within us. They tend to defend their views with intellect and science. One of our language school teachers told us that Germany doesn't have any natural resources, but they offer the world their intellect. Germans are taught to think critically, and this in turn leads to a critical spirit about most everything – especially religion. That is why a relationship is so important! Until people have a chance to see Jesus in us, they will continue to defend their stance.

“Good to go” in East Germany means being ready to allow God to put us in places where He wants us to be to meet the people He wants us to meet. It means being willing to have a relationship with someone who will constantly question and criticize what we believe, which in turn pushes us to have a strong faith and to really know what we believe! It means choosing to love people who are hard to love for the sake of Christ.

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Evelyn, one of our language tutors, was one of those people. Hardened by her past and years of bitterness, she was not open to the Lord at all. In fact, she said to us, “If there is a God, why did He give me the life I have?” She tried to push us away with her criticisms and harsh words, but we continued loving her with the love of Jesus. One day, we received a phone call from her. She had cancer and needed our help. One evening, sitting by her bedside, I again explained to her what Jesus had done for her, and asked her once again if she wanted to receive His death for her. She turned to me with tears in her eyes and whispered “Ja”. A few weeks later, we stood at her graveside with her two sons and their wives. We would have been standing there alone if it hadn’t been for Jesus. He brought healing and restoration in those few short weeks to a family who had not talked to one another for years.

Engaging our world of East Germany means being filled daily with Christ and His love and grace, so that at all times and in all things, we will have all that we need to build relationships so that people will see God, not just with their minds, but also with their hearts.

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