

When You're Asked to Lead a Church Service

Had an interesting interview today with a pastor who had received my name as a referral to fill in at the pulpit while he's on vacation. Now, I speak to a lot of groups—mostly at libraries, schools or women's church luncheons. But you can bet I pretty much choked up a gizzard over a Sunday morning sanctuary invitation.

My first question to this very kind and gentle man of the cloth was, "Do you realize I'm a woman?" Apparently his denomination has no problem with that issue. He'd heard I'm a Christian humorist, and he felt his congregation could use a little levity with their dutiful dose of religion.

Second question: "Do you realize that I'm not a preacher?" I assured him that to consider me a preacher was demeaning to his profession. "I'm an encourager, a fellow sojourner in this Christian walk, perhaps even a lay minister, since I consider all followers of Jesus ministers to their fellow man, but I would never in a million years be called a preacher.

"In my opinion, preaching is an honored calling for special servants of God. I have nothing but respect for true preachers, and my little feet wouldn't begin to fill those large shoes."

We settled on "sharing." Now, that I can do. That I love to do; my preferred delivery is through the written word, but I've found that sometimes it's got to be verbal. People need to see the joy of the Lord in action face to face, not eye to paper. Something dynamic is lost in the translation if it's just read about and not felt.

So although Billy Graham I'll never be, I can be something akin to a Rhonda Rhea, a Martha Bolton or a Chonda Pierce. Or

best yet, a Debbie Coty–God’s favorite choice for me.

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