

Everything I Needed for Ministry I Learned While Being a Church Janitor

by Dick Gruber

My first year as a paid children's pastor found me in beautiful Farmington, Minnesota. The church was growing, as was I. I learned one day that our janitor had quit. Discovering that the janitor was paid more than the children's pastor, I quickly took advantage of this knowledge and volunteered to become the new janitor.

I was so thrilled that first day as janitor/pastor. I had more than doubled my income in one meeting with my senior pastor. Now I not only got to minister to the children, but I entered a whole new realm of ministry to their floors, walls, and unmentionables.

In the time that followed, I learned much about life and ministry. I was no longer limited to development of craft projects, special meetings and activities. Now I could clean up after their implementation.

It has been over twenty years since my janitor/pastor experience. When I begin losing a proper perspective, I think about the things I learned while being a church janitor. Here are some of the things I learned. Perhaps

they will help you keep a proper perspective in your life and ministry.



Wipe your own feet before walking all over the church.



Always say, "Thank-you," especially when people leave a mess.



Leave it better than you found it.



Some people are messy and others are too.



Church doesn't have to be messy to be good, but messy is a lot more interesting.



Clean up after yourself.



Glue, gum, and grease do not make a clean carpet.



Where there are people, there will be dirt.



Begin setting up for next week's class today.



Pick up the large pieces before you vacuum.



Christians that leave dirt behind are much happier than those who carry it.



Serving is ministry.



People are not an interruption to the work. They are the work.



Naptime is still a good idea.



Church property is everybody's responsibility.



Share with others.
Share your broom, mop, sponge, and life.



Consider even the most menial task as something to be dedicated to God.



When liquid spills, wipe up the spill at its highest level before moving lower.



Thank God for indoor plumbing.



Treat the hired help with respect and dignity.



Pray without ceasing.



Every healthy body will leave a mess behind.



Listen to those who serve in your church.



Cleaning up after church people is a never-ending task.



Extra change found unexpectedly belongs to God.



Take out the trash and leave it out.

Questions for Further Study—

1. When you are stuck with menial jobs, what attitude should you have?

2. What are some things you have learned from performing menial tasks?