

# The Port of Hope

- Preparing God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:12

Helping to Build Spiritual Movements Everywhere so Everyone Knows Someone who Truly Follows Jesus Christ

## God's Initiative vs. Our Initiative

### God Takes The Initiative to Involve His People in His Work

How often do you do things for God? Did you ever stop to think that this might be a bad thing? To be honest with you, I would probably debate this issue with many people, but recently God has been doing some work in and through us that has challenged us with respect to this.

For those of you familiar with "Experiencing God" you realize that Henry Blackaby frequently discusses the difference between our initiative and God's initiative. He quotes John 5:17-20 and reflects on the fact that Jesus stated "the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing..." If I understand this correctly even Jesus took no initiative, but did only what the Father instructed Him to do.

So here's my issue: for years I and others have been doing things for God (feeding the poor, initiating outreach programs, starting ministries within churches, etc.) and I'm beginning to realize that God did not bless some of these. It's not as though they weren't good, it's just that some were our work for Him and not His work through us. I've got to admit that I did many things in the flesh and as a result did not get "God-sized" results.

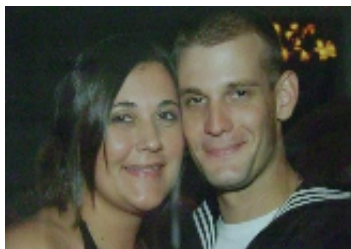
Recently He's helped us learn the difference between His initiative and the initiative of



Andrew, Amber and Boys

others. A few weeks ago we sensed the need to find a church near the Naval complex north of the base. I didn't know why, but began praying and driving around. I pulled into a church parking lot, prayed and decided to call the pastor. When I got hold of him, he explained that they've been trying to serve Navy Families for a year but had no inroads. We talked extensively and that church is now committed to serving with us.

That same week, we heard about a serious problem on the USS Ford (Right). After talking with one of the chaplains, we discovered that the ship is facing many struggles as they prepare to deploy. We were asked to pray and through that we saw God initiating



Josh and Aimee

some things. One is that a couple of the wives from the ship (Aimee and Amber) shared that they had a burden to reach out to other wives whose husbands are on the ship. We shared our burden with the chaplains and they too felt that they needed help with the families.

Following this, we met with some of the "lay-leaders" on the ship, and we received further confirmation from them about the spiritual and moral condition of the ship. They expressed that they too sensed a tremendous need for God and were very open to our help. In addition, they commented that some of the Christian men on the ship were beginning to step up and serve the spiritual needs of the crew.

When we alerted the pastor of the local church that I mentioned earlier, they pledged to serve where ever necessary for the ship. He began to share that they would make their church available to help out the spouses. He's since spoken to their congregation and many have come forward in service.

As His word tells us "God's ways are not our ways" and this is a great example of what we're seeing; the difference between His initiative and ours. It is immense freedom when we do things His way to reveal His purposes. We're looking forward to what's next!

**JUST IMAGINE WHAT GOD COULD DO IF ALL OF US FOLLOWED HIS INITIATIVE AND NOT OURS?**

April 2009

### Prayer Requests

- Pray for Chaplain Johnson who will be serving the USS Ford
- Pray for the believers on the Ford that they would commit to serving one another and reaching out to those who don't know Christ
- Pray for the lay-leaders that they would meet their work requirements and the spiritual needs
- Pray the wives who will take an active role in facilitating the group and sharing the love of Christ with other wives
- Pray for the senior leadership aboard the Ford

