

A Prayer Cottage

2 Corinthians 9:8

God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

While we ministered in Grove City, Pennsylvania God gave me a burden for prayer. I was preparing to write a book titled, *Spending Time Alone With God*. We were teaching about prayer and practical prayer disciplines to our church. We conducted church prayer retreats where we would spend Friday evening and all of Saturday at a church camp learning about and practicing prayer. Twice a year we had anywhere from 25 to 45 people involved.

I had also been teaching my pastoral staff to spend time alone with God and led them on staff retreats for prayer and vision quests. They were to get away alone with God three times each year. I encouraged them to find a quiet retreat center where they could spend two or three days in prayer.

As we were doing these retreats Marilyn and I thought about what we'd like to do in retirement. We both wanted to have a retreat available for people that wanted to get away for 24 or 48 hours just to be alone with God.

On one of our pastoral prayer retreats we were walking around the campground as we prayed. One of my assistant pastors met an elderly woman who asked him if he knew anybody that wanted a cottage. Of course he was interested. He also wanted a prayer cottage. He said he was interested, but wanted to know what it would cost and what it looked like. She said she just wanted to give it away. She was too old to take care of the cottage and wanted someone who would use it. Then she showed it to him.

It was in bad shape, the roof caved in, there was black mold everywhere, the chipmunks, mice and other critters had invaded the cottage. It needed a huge amount of work. This woman gave her cottage to Bill and he began the process of cleaning it up.

Unfortunately, two years later Bill ended up with terminal cancer before he could finish the cottage. He called me to his bedside one day and handed me the keys to the cottage and he said, "Pastor, we both have been praying for a prayer cottage. I'm going home to be with the Lord. I am giving you the keys. I'm asking you to take the cottage and make it into prayer retreat cottage."

That is how God provided a prayer cottage for us. After I retired I was able to spend many hours working on that cottage almost rebuilding the entire cottage to

make it adequate for prayer retreats. Many people have donated money to make the renovations possible. Now we have a place at a church camp that is available for anyone who would like to spend 24 to 48 hours alone with God. God is our provider.