

WHAT I LEARNED IN CANADA...

In the beginning considerations of going on a mission trip, my perception of such an opportunity was this: you give of your time and finances to use the talents God has blessed you with for serving him. And that is true, of course... but, what I didn't initially consider was that I, myself would be ministered to and even



changed.

This last week in Canada was a tremendous experience for our whole family. Our primary mission was to help with an Upward Basketball camp for middle school kids. Our schedule went like this: 9a-12p we taught the boys and 1p-4p we taught the girls. What a great group of young people we had the privilege of getting to know! We held devotionals daily with both groups, we shared our hearts, we prayed with them, and we planted seeds. God has the watering can, and the Son to grow them!

As I said before, what took me by surprise on this trip is how I felt ministered to! I was the one there to minister, right? Let me explain some of what I learned that changed my perceptions of a mission trip, allowing me to learn and be changed.

*I learned that sometimes it's the children who lead! Shelby, my daughter, is 8. As we enjoyed lunch at the church on Sunday (about 12 hours after arriving in Penticton), Shelby visited with Pastor John about sharing from a book that has touched her heart. Clearly led by the spirit, Shelby stood up in front of many, and read into the microphone sharing the love of God with these people she did not even know yet! She let the Spirit of God lead her actions... I want to be more like that.

* I learned that being a servant doesn't always look like we expect! In his sermon, Pastor John shared how Bill had served their church faithfully every Wednesday for 15 years. For fifteen years he's showed up doing whatever he could to help! What was amazing about this man was that never once had he attended a service...until the Sunday we were there! Could it be that it was us who needed to hear and see what it means to be a faithful servant?

* I learned that God may bring you with a mission to coach basketball and you end up ministering to a rock band! Outside the gym where we played every day, was a foyer where a very talented youth rock band practiced daily for 2 hours. We got to know their songs and sang along, clapped and cheered for them. On Thursday our kids handed out Bibles to them and invited them to church. After watching them practice all week, we attended the performance in the city park that they'd been preparing for. Here again, God will water the seeds.

*I learned that the "church" is the *people* not the building! I stand so blessed to have attended the Abundant Life Church service in Penticton last Sunday. The people were REAL people. Their expression of worship was AUTHENTIC. They were joyful that we were there and our communication was GENUINE. It was moving to feel the presence of God's Spirit in that room.

The "sacrifices" of a mission trip may be time, financial or comfort. And, for us, it was difficult to commit to initially, but I hope through my experience you can see that not only will you feel the joy of serving God on a trip like this, but likely your heart too will be changed.

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