

IN TUNE

WITH THE

Christmas Spirit

When we have a true desire to serve, the Lord will help us perform the service He requires of us.

By Kristen Danner Reber

The Sunday before Christmas, I was one of only a handful of students from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, still in town after finals. Sunday School had ended, and as I wondered what I would do after church, two women in my young single adult ward approached me.

“Kristen, we’re going to the hospital around 2:30 this afternoon to sing Christmas carols. Would you like to come?”

Since my singing voice has never been very pleasant, I politely declined.

“We don’t care if your voice isn’t good! We just want people to come!”

I told them I would think about it.

As Relief Society started, I thought back to eight months earlier when I had been in the hospital myself. At the time I’d been a missionary in the Philippines and had been so happy when a few members of the local singles ward had visited with me for an hour. I decided to go.

“White Christmas”

That afternoon a group of us, four men and four women, drove to the hospital. The first patient was an elderly man, who asked if we could sing Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas.”

We’d only brought hymnbooks, and as we glanced at each other, it was clear that none of us knew all the words to that song. We told him that we would do our best but that we may not get past the first line. He nodded, but we could tell that it would mean a lot to him if we remembered the words. Silently I began to exercise faith and pray for help. Incredibly, after each line, one or two people would remember some words and the rest of us would join in. We managed to sing the entire song, word for word, and the elderly man was very touched—the first of the tender mercies we experienced that day.

“O Holy Night”

A few patients later, a middle-aged woman, frustrated with her illness, tearfully requested “O Holy Night.” We all sincerely wanted to help her feel better, but once again we glanced at each other in hesitation about the words. I felt confident that I knew at least most of them, but I wasn’t



HEARTS TO INSPIRE

“Let us have ready hands, clean hands, and willing hands, that we may participate in providing what our Heavenly Father would have others receive from Him. . . .

“ . . . There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. The blessings of eternity await you.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Willing and Worthy to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 67, 69.



confident about leading everyone with my voice. However, I wanted to help the woman, and so after a few moments of silence, I swallowed my fear and said, “I think I know the words.”

Everyone looked at me. I pushed fear away again and began to sing. Amazingly, I started on the correct note in the correct key! This hardly ever happened to me. Everyone else picked up on the note and began to sing as well. I prayed silently again for help to remember the words, and once again we were able to sing the song in full. The woman was in joyful tears by the end of our performance.

Sharing the Spirit of Christmas

At the beginning of our hospital visit, I had noticed that there were really only two gifted singers in our group. The rest of us did the best we could, and while we sounded decent, we were nothing spectacular. However, with each patient that we visited, the Spirit seemed to increase, and so did the quality of our voices. By the end of the hour, I was even harmonizing with the other women. The men sounded excellent too.

I’m not sure why this small miracle occurred. Perhaps because we only desired the talent to make others happy, it was granted to us for a

short time (see 1 Corinthians 14:1). I wasn’t the only one who noticed—another woman in our group commented on the way out, “I’m not a very good singer, but I always find that my voice improves when I do service like this.”

Through this experience I was reminded of the true meaning of Christmas—Jesus Christ—and how important it is that we do His work for Him while on the earth. How grateful I am that I accepted the invitation to visit the hospital and that I was able to feel a portion of His love for each of the people to whom we sang. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.