

September 13, 2011

Dear Friend,

Have you ever called one of your lawmakers?

If so, you likely spoke with a staff member. These men and women work behind the scenes scheduling, reviewing legislation, planning, networking, note-taking, writing constituents and doing many other tasks. They receive the fury of angry voters often without a word of encouragement or appreciation from those above.

As the seasons change, our ministry transitions to these men and women. We see Capitol staff members every week and now know each one by name. There are roughly 150 who work from Springfield, and fall is when their schedule is most free for a weekly Bible study.

The Supreme Court will be in session four times through year-end, and the Legislature will return twice. Apart from these, our focus will be upon the staff. As we study James' Epistle, particularly the study included, the message is not likely to be received well. Many believe that a profession of faith = saving faith. According to James, a faith that doesn't manifest itself is a false one. True faith works (cf. James 2:14-26).

Pray as we minister to the staff. If some are offended, may it be because of God's Word and not us. Pray for changed lives and for an overall fruitful time of fellowship and study. Much of our summer has been devoted to reading. I have been encouraged from studying the First Great Awakening (1730's and 40's) that prayer and faithful preaching are foundational for eternal fruit. Pray this would be true of our ministry in Illinois this fall and thereafter.

Reading has been a staple of my summer to-do list. One goal has been to understand the history of evangelicals in the political arena. Why? To learn from it and form a theology of political involvement. Certainly the church has some role as it relates to the state—what is it exactly? Not much exists that thoughtfully wrestles with this question or attempts to build an overarching theology. It's been a joy to study, write and speak with this end in mind.

God is good, and with each season of ministry new opportunities develop. There are always challenges but with them come many blessings. We praise God for planting us here, placing us in a good church and giving us this stewardship in Illinois. Thank you for your support and encouragement as His Word goes forth.

Soli Deo Gloria,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shaun Lewis".

Shaun Lewis
State Director, Illinois