

A small, important thing

By [Diane Roth](#)

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I had a funeral recently, a small funeral in our chapel for a retired teacher from our community. She had just a few, particular requests for her funeral: that we would read Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, that we would sing "Beautiful Savior," and that a woman from our congregation would sing.

She did not designate a particular song; she just wanted this woman to sing, an alto from our church's choir. As it turned out, they had also sung together in a community choir.

I was happy to ask her to sing, and the woman was happy to accept the invitation. She just had one question for me, "Will you sing with me?"

Back in the day, she and her husband were often asked to sing at funerals. He had died a few years ago, but people still asked her to sing, on occasion. So I didn't think she was asking because she didn't want to sing alone. She was perfectly capable of singing by herself. Actually, I didn't know why she asked me.

I said yes.

We decided on a song ("Abide with Me") and divided up the parts and practiced a couple of times. I sang soprano on one verse and tenor an octave higher on another verse. I remembered how I used to sing with my sister, on occasion. But that was many years ago. The last time, we sang "Whispering Hope." I remembered how it felt, singing harmony, singing the melody, hearing our voices blend, the pitches meet and separate.

Afterwards, she said, simply, "I have always wanted to sing with you. So I thought this was the opportunity."

That's all it was. It was a small thing. But it was a gift.

And it is a kind of leadership, too, to be able to do it alone, but to say: I have always

wanted to do it with you. I have always wanted to sing with you. I have always wanted to serve with you. I have always wanted to teach with you.

It is the grace of leadership. Or the leadership of grace.

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