

# *The Gift of Standing By*

Donald Gray Barnhouse, pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and a pioneer in radio broadcasting, told an insightful story about Charles Evans Hughes, chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.

When Hughes moved to Washington, D.C., to take up his duties as chief justice (he served from 1930 to 1941 and was governor of New York from 1907 to 1910), he transferred his membership to a Baptist church in the area. His father had been a Baptist minister, and he also made a profession of faith in Christ.

It was the custom for all new members to come to the front of the sanctuary at the close of the worship service. The first to be called that morning was Ah Sing, a Chinese laundryman who had moved to the capital from the West coast. He took his place at the far side of the church.

As a dozen or so other people were called forward, they stood at the opposite side of the church, leaving Ah Sing standing alone. But when Chief Justice Hughes' name was called, he took his place beside the laundryman.

When the minister had welcomed the group into the church fellowship, he turned to the congregation and said, "I do not want this congregation to miss this remarkable illustration of the fact that at the cross of Jesus Christ the ground is level."

After telling of that incident, Dr. Barnhouse commented: "Mr. Hughes behaved like a true Christian. He took his place beside the laundryman, and by his act he prevented embarrassment to the humble Chinese. He showed, too, the love of Christ – he had this gift of standing by."

And what a gift that is. Standing by means validation, support and encouragement in many situations, such as ...

- A grief-stricken person whose spouse has died.
- A family whose house has been destroyed by fire.
- A friend who has received the news of some dread disease.
- A newcomer to a community.
- A mother whose son has been called to war in service to his country.
- An associate reporting for his or her first day on the job.
- A family considering placing a loved one in a health-care facility.

The list goes on and on. Standing by has opportunities for actuation every day. Embrace the moment.

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter