

HEARTBEATS- Staying Connected 10/1/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have a friend called Matt who was leaving work a bit early on a Thursday. When his coworkers asked where he was going, he replied that he was going to attend the Thursday evening Bible study at our church, which he normally was not able to do. He explained that he had to work that weekend, so he was going to join the Thursday study group. So, one of his colleagues said, “Oh, your church makes you go to Bible study if you miss church?”

“No,” Matt replied, “because I can’t go to church this week, I’m going to go to the Bible study so I still get to spend some time hearing what God has to say to me.”

Matt is not shy about his Christian faith. Many of his fellow workers know that Matt is a Christian, but are not involved in church themselves, so they will often come to Matt to ask questions about the church and faith. Matt’s openness with his faith has provided him many opportunities to tell others what being a Christian is all about for him, and to correct many misconceptions about the Christian religion.

Many Christians would not hesitate to identify themselves as Christians if asked, but don’t do much to share their faith and spiritual practices. Christianity is something that they actively do on Sunday mornings, and at home, and on a few other occasions, but it is not something they make known when they are at work, or with their neighbors, or out in the community. Unfortunately, this prevents them from having those conversations that may bring others closer to a meaningful relationship with the Lord.

It is important that we understand our faith as something that we carry with us all the time. It is vital that we allow it to shape who we are everyday and how we interact with others. It doesn’t mean that we have to be overt, wearing Christian paraphernalia or displaying it on our desks. Yet, we can make our Christian faith evident in how we work and treat others, in the language we use, and in sharing our priorities. Martin Luther once said, “The Christian shoemaker does his duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.” When we recognize that what we are doing can be one of the ways that we praise God—by doing our very best in appreciation for the opportunity to work and to serve others—we can witness to our Christian faith.

My friend Matt has made it known that he is an active Christian and is always ready to answer those who asked him about his faith. He even has a five-point summary (one for each finger) of what he believes. A few months after the encounter I described above, Matt began offering a Bible study group during lunch for any at his office who wished to come. Quite a few, who had come to trust Matt because of his commitment to his work, and his openness and kind treatment of others, also began to attend that study and to learn more about God in Christ Jesus. You don’t have to put crosses on everything you do. But if you do whatever you do well so to honor the Lord, the door to sharing your faith will begin to open more and more.

In Christ's love, Pastor Jeffrey