

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 7/10/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, July 11 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those living in extreme heat. Pray for adequate water and shelter. Ask that they be kept safe. Give thanks to those who bring assistance to those in need.*

From time to time, I've talked about the formula for simple evangelism: 1) Make a friend; 2) Be a friend; 3) Bring a friend to CHRIST. I read this week a wonderful story about a woman who demonstrated the first two steps of that process in a very low risk and meaningful way. I thought you, at the very least, would enjoy hearing the story, and perhaps might be inspired to try something similar if the occasion arises for you.

The woman named Brooke had gone to a restaurant and was not planning on meeting anyone there. She was just going to have a meal there by herself. At the restaurant, as she was getting to the door, Brooke saw an elderly woman also coming toward the door, though very slowly because of her age. While many might have hurried through or perhaps held the door behind them for the woman, Brooke waited at the door and held it open for this lady. She was very grateful for Brooke's kindness.

Brooke then overheard the elderly lady ask for a table for one. Brooke, who had already been seated realized that this other woman was going to be eating alone so, after hesitating for just a moment, Brooke went up and said, "I'm eating by myself, too. Would you like to have lunch together?"

The woman, whose name was Dolores, lit up. She was delighted and immediately agreed to sit down with Brooke, thanking her for the invitation. As they chatted, Dolores opened up about the loneliness she had been experiencing recently. Her mother had just passed away. Dolores had been caring for her mom for the past ten years in her home. Her aunt had also been living with them, but not long ago had to be placed in a nursing home. Dolores confessed that she had been having a hard time being alone.

As is often the case when we reach out like this, there is gratitude felt on both sides. Dolores couldn't stop thanking Brooke for offering to sit with her and for listening to her sorrows. Brooke was also blessed to hear so many words of thanks from Dolores and felt tremendously grateful for the appreciation Dolores had shown.

Before their meal ended, Brooke and Dolores made an arrangement to meet for lunch at the same restaurant every Thursday from that day onward. That practice continued for some time until Dolores passed away. Brooke misses her friend but is extremely pleased for having gotten to know her and being able to spend time with her each week.

I don't know if Brooke and Dolores ever had a conversation about faith. But Brooke certainly demonstrated those first two steps. Through a simple invitation to lunch, Brooke made a friend. And by making the commitment to meet with her each week, Brooke was a friend to Dolores. I'm sure you can see how an effort such as this might soon lead to being able to invite someone to come and meet JESUS at our church. It's also clear from this story that it doesn't have to be hard or uncomfortable. In fact, it really is pretty simple: 1) Make a friend. 2) Be a friend. 3) Bring a friend to CHRIST.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey