

Become a Barnabas on the Job

Air Dates: August 28 – September 1, 2023

Day One

Do you have a nickname? Often we get stuck with nicknames from our childhood, or based on a certain characteristic, and it may not necessarily be flattering. However, there is one person in the Bible who was given a nickname because of a very wonderful trait. His name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas, which means Son of Encouragement. You can read about him in Acts 4.

Imagine people calling you a name that signified you were an encouraging person. I can't think of a greater compliment, can you? I want to show you how you can become a Barnabas in your workplace; you can be known as a person who encourages others. A good friend, Traci Mason, has compiled these ideas and allowed me to share them with you.

We all recognize that often our workplaces are full of discouragement, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic. But this just gives us a perfect opportunity to help others by becoming an encouraging person. Now, mind you, this will take some time and effort on your part, but the return on your investment will be eternal!

So, here are some practical ways you can become a Barnabas where you work:

- Write notes. Handwritten notes are almost extinct. Keep a supply of note cards and encourage colleagues by placing a note on their desk, in their mailbox, or in their hand. It's easy to make personalized cards on our computers now; so get creative and write a note just to encourage someone.
- Send e-cards. It's really easy to send an e-card to your coworkers just to let them know you are thinking of them. You can even send the same card to multiple addresses. Employees receive messages that make requests and give instructions. They would surely welcome something more pleasant in the in-box, and an e-card would be a pleasant surprise.
- Remember birthdays. Find out the birthdates of coworkers, put them on your calendar, and simply give each coworker a birthday card to help them celebrate their special day. I've begun doing that for the women in my church, and we send out birthday cards here too, and I've been amazed at how many people are encouraged to receive a special birthday card—and it's so easy to do!

Day Two

The Apostle Paul wrote to Philemon that "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints" (Philemon 1:7). What a wonderful tribute to Philemon. Wouldn't you like someone to say that about you?

Well, we can all become encouragers if we decide to do some specific things for the purpose of encouraging others. Here are some more practical ideas that you can do on your job to encourage others:

- Smile! Did you realize that by a simple smile you could cheer someone up and encourage someone? Smiles are contagious and can brighten the atmosphere where you work. When talking to or passing by others, just turn up the corners of your mouth and flash them a radiant smile. Costs you nothing, and it could really make a difference in someone's day.
- Greet people! As you enter the workplace, greet coworkers with a simple, "Good morning." You never know the energy it took for others to arrive at work. A pleasant greeting can start a person's day off right and possibly help them forget about their troubles.
- Be the Welcome Committee. When a new employee joins the staff, introduce yourself and offer to be of assistance. Help that person find his or her way around, offer to have lunch together. Think how comforting it could be to that new colleague, because being the new person can be challenging and a little frightening.
- Share your lunch. If you're not working remotely, this is an easy way to get to know someone. Or if you baked something special and have some leftovers, bring it in for others to enjoy. Remotely, you could schedule a one-on-one zoom to catch up during lunch time.

You may think that these don't sound that impressive or important, but it is so often the little things that we remember to do that touch someone else, helps them see they are not forgotten, and they are encouraged. Become an encourager on the job. It will make a difference.

Day Three

I'm encouraging you to become a Barnabas where you work. And you do that by deciding to do things for people that will encourage them.

These ideas I'm sharing with you are often very small things that take little time or money, but they can truly make a difference. So, here are some more creative ways you can be a Barnabas on the job:

- Offer to help your boss. Really, you could ask your boss what you could do to help him or her, especially if you know that your boss is under a lot of pressure. Bosses need help just like everybody else, yet often they are overlooked.
- Be sensitive to the sniffles. If someone is under the weather, send a note or offer to help with the workload.
- Acknowledge good work. When a coworker does something well, you could acknowledge it with a word, or an email, or a written note, just to let them know that someone notices the effort they put into a job and it was appreciated.
- Offer to pray for a coworker. There are times when a coworker shares a worry or concern with you, either personal or job-related. Instead of allowing it to degrade into a griping or gossip session, simply offer to pray for that person. You may not be able to pray at that moment on the job, but you can assure them that you will remember that situation in prayer. I believe you'll find that most people are glad for you to pray for them.
- Listen. If a coworker wants to share a problem with you, take the time to listen and give that person your devoted attention. Obviously, you need to be careful not to take advantage of time you should be working, but a listening ear can be one of the most encouraging things you can do for a coworker.

You know, if you become a Barnabas on the job, as you encourage people, you will be amazed at how God will use you right there as a beacon of his light and love.

Day Four

Here are a few more simple things you can do to become a Barnabas—an encourager—where you work:

- Be a good employee. It's not always easy to submit to your boss, but that is what Christians in the workplace are to do. When given instructions, follow them—unless they would cause you to betray your integrity. Just being a good employee will be encouraging to your boss, if no one else, but it also sets a good example for others.
- Take second place. Be willing to be the last in line, to take the worst seat, to let someone else take credit. That's not easy to do sometimes, but it's the servant attitude that Jesus had, and we need to have it as well.
- Apologize. If you've made a mistake, done something you should not have done, said something you should not have said, own up to it as soon as possible and simply apologize. A friend of mine says the biggest difference between her and her coworkers who are not believers is that she apologizes more than they do! Well, an apology can go a long way toward relieving tension in relationships, and it will indeed be an act of encouragement.

Truthfully, how many encouraging words do you hear in a normal day? In many work environments, they are few and far between. But if you become a Barnabas on your job, and with sincerity you offer words of encouragement, you will become a beacon of light in that world. So, you can become a Barnabas—a person who refuses to be discouraged, and instead, offers words of encouragement to those around you. It's what Jesus would do, and this is one simple but important way you can be his ambassador right where you work.

Day Five

Would you say that you could use a little encouragement? It could be that you're just discouraged. Things aren't going the way you want them to, finances are difficult, your health may not be the best, relationships could be strained and unpleasant. Life has a way of sapping our joy, doesn't it? It could be that you truly need some encouragement right now.

Well, if so, I want to suggest you follow the three principles of sowing and reaping, which are:

1. You reap what you sow.
2. You reap in a different season than you sow.
3. You reap more than you sow.

Therefore, if you need encouragement, then sow some encouragement. Encourage someone else, and that seed of encouragement will come back to you in abundance. It may not come right away, but it will come. You will reap encouragement in season, even more than you can imagine.

Isaiah 1:17 reminds us, "Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed." The Apostle Paul was continually encouraging people and admonishing new believers to be encouragers. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11 he said, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." Notice how he complimented them while at the same time encouraging them to encourage each other.

This should be a trademark of a Christian—to be an encouraging person. And becoming an encourager is something all of us can do. I trust these simple ideas I've shared with you will cause you to stop and think about what you can do to be a more effective encourager—to be a Barnabas in your workplace.