

Sharing God's Love at Work

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Day One

If you go to a secular workplace every day, you may wonder what in the world you can do in that kind of environment to share your faith in Jesus Christ, to really have an impact for the Gospel. This week I'm going to give you ten suggestions for sharing God's love where you work.

1. Set aside a certain time each day or week to pray for your workplace.

I have discovered many Christians don't really pray for their workplace. I think sometimes we separate our "secular jobs" from our spiritual life, as though the two have nothing in common. But for a Christian, everything should be sacred. We should all see ourselves in "full time Christian work," and so our workplaces are, in effect, our mission field.

What is the best way to pray for your workplace? First, pray for those in authority, for your relationship with them, for wisdom as they make decisions. Then pray for the success of the business, that God will bless the efforts of those working there. Pray for the morale of the workers, that there will be good working relationships, a good team atmosphere, conducive to good work. And then pray for whatever distressing or troubling situations you are experiencing. For example, if the company is experiencing a difficult economic situation, pray for new business, for creative marketing ideas, and so forth.

I would encourage you to set aside a specific time to pray for your workplace, maybe on Mondays, so you have this programmed into your schedule, and you don't overlook it.

2. Take prayer walks through your company/organization/building, live or virtual.

Now, this is a clandestine kind of prayer, not one you advertise or talk about. But it's easy to do. If you're working in your workplace, maybe you could take a lunch hour, say once a week, and walk through your company, up and down the various hallways and floors, inconspicuously, and quietly pray for each person and department as you walk by their office or place of work. Or if it's a small workplace, you might walk around the building. Perhaps you might do this before work one day, when not too many people are around. This is an effective way to remember to pray for the people in your company, department, or division.

Or if you work from home, pray through a list of the people who work in your company or division.

Here are two things any of us can and should do to bring God's love to our workplace. I truly believe you will be amazed to see how prayer can change things where you work.

Day Two

Have you ever had an opportunity to preach the gospel where you work? If you are in a secular workplace, I seriously doubt it! Then how can Christians effectively share God's love where they work? I'm sharing ten suggestions anyone can do to become the Bible people read, the living Word of God on our jobs. Here are suggestions three and four.

3. Go through your schedule for each day and pray for the people you know you will interact with.

I know many of you are facing added stress and pressure from your jobs these days. There seems to be more workload for fewer people, and I hear from many of you that you're expected to do more than you can get done in a day's time. This kind of environment can easily cause interpersonal problems with coworkers.

So, pray in advance for the people you will interact with on any given day. Remember, no one is in your life by accident, so even that difficult co-worker can be changed by God's love. Ask God to give you wisdom in how best to deal with the difficult people on your job. Ask him to help you see them the way he sees them and to give you a loving attitude toward them. Remember, you don't have to like someone to show them God's love.

Make it a daily practice to pray through your day before it starts, and you will discover God supplies strength and ideas and helps to get you through the day with a loving and kind attitude toward the people you encounter.

4. Plan acts of kindness.

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful (2 Timothy 2:24).

If you are a servant of Jesus Christ, your calling is to be kind to everyone—everyone! I think we have to remember to be kind, don't you? You can just get so busy, trying to do your job and keep all your balls in the air, that you forget to do the kind things that matter to people. Here are two easy suggestions.

Send cards at appropriate times. You could find out the birth dates of your coworkers, put them on your calendar, and then simply send a birthday card. Even an email card would be fine. It doesn't have to be expensive.

Celebrate significant events in the lives of co-workers—like promotions, graduations, or marriages and anniversaries. It doesn't take much effort to bring in some goodies and have a small celebration, and it truly is meaningful. But you need to plan those acts of kindness and be intentional about them.

Day Three

I'm offering ten suggestions for sharing God's love where you work. If you missed the first four, you'll find them on our website at christianworkingwoman.org. Now, here are suggestions five and six.

5. Help others with their workload when you can.

Maybe you have an assistant who helps you, and you know she or he is just overloaded with work at the moment. If you said, "Hey, I can stay an extra hour tonight and help get that done," don't you think that could really be an effective way to communicate God's love? Or maybe you know a co-worker is struggling with a certain assignment. Maybe she doesn't know how to get started. If you've got some experience or expertise that would help them, just stop what you're doing and help them out.

Obviously, you have your own work to do, which cannot be neglected, but there are times when stopping to help someone else is just the right, thoughtful thing to do.

6. Look for opportunities to congratulate and compliment people any time you can.

Think about it: aren't there times in the day when you think something nice about someone, but you don't express it? I try to make myself verbalize the compliments I think. For example, if you like the outfit someone is wearing, and think, "That looks nice on her," then why not say it to her? If you think, "He did a great job on that," why not say it? I think we would be more encouraging to others if we simply determined to verbalize the compliments we think.

Also, look for ways to congratulate people on any accomplishment possible. "I noticed you stayed late last night and finished that job. Thanks." "Your daughter made the Dean's List this semester? Terrific!"

There are so many little things we can do on any given day to show love and concern for others, to demonstrate we are thinking about someone beside ourselves. We live in a world that is pretty self-centered, but as servants of Jesus Christ, we are called to *look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others*, as we read in Philippians 2.

These things we can do because we have the motivation of God's Spirit within us, and the power he imparts to us, and believe me, God's love will be felt as you intentionally seek ways to share God's love on your job.

Day Four

Have you shared God's love on the job lately? Sometimes it seems like the workplace is the last place we can talk about God or share our faith. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians that they were

... a letter from Christ ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

We can be the word of the living God, a letter of love from Jesus to the people we work with, when we take time to let God's love shine through us. I've given you six ideas on how to do that already this week. Here are numbers 7 and 8.

7. Smile

Are you aware your body language is louder than the words you speak? It's true, and so we can send messages of love without saying a word. Smiling is surely one of the easiest and most effective ways to do that. All of us can smile; doesn't cost a thing; doesn't take any time. You just have to remember to do it.

Proverbs reminds us *a cheerful look brings joy to the heart (Proverbs 15:30.)* Why don't we work harder at smiling more? I'm not advocating phony, insincere smiles, but many of us just need to work at smiling more. We feel smiles on the inside, but don't show them on our faces. That's my problem, I know, so I really try to remember to smile more. You may have been born with a smile on your face, so it comes easy for you. But some of us need to remember to smile, because it brings joy to the heart, and it shares a little of God's love with others.

8. Do the "dirty work" sometimes, even if it's not your job.

There are always those things that need to be done in a workplace environment that nobody really wants to do. They aren't in anyone's job description. Things like cleaning the kitchen or making the coffee; cleaning up after a meeting or tidying up the general work area. In smaller workplaces, it might be taking out the trash or taking the mail to the post office.

If you just do those things occasionally, without being asked and without grumbling, it would be a good way to show a loving, caring attitude toward the people you work with and for.

Too often we think the only way we can witness for Jesus is through the words we say—quoting Scripture or giving our testimony or explaining the four spiritual laws. And frankly, there are not many opportunities on any given day to do that. But there are countless ways to show the love of God through our actions and our attitudes. But we must be intentional about it.

Day Five

How can you build relationships with your co-workers, so you have an opportunity to share God's love with them, tell them of your faith journey, and be a witness for Jesus on the job? That's what we've been looking at this week. I've offered eight suggestions so far, and if you missed any of them, they are all available on our website at christianworkingwoman.org

Today we're looking at the last two ways we can share God's love on the job.

9. Be ready to apologize when you need to.

My friend, Janet, says the major difference between her and her co-workers who are not yet believers is she apologizes more often! Being humble enough to apologize when you're wrong is definitely a God thing, and it really does go a long way to breaking down barriers and solving problems.

10. Build relationships with your coworkers by using work break times as an opportunity to talk.

It is not appropriate to use any significant amount of company time for personal conversations. But there is your lunch hour and other times you can use for building relationships.

Let me tell you about my friend, Cynthia. Many years ago, she worked in a difficult environment, where she was not fully accepted as a co-equal, because she is African American. She sensed this attitude, particularly on the part of one coworker, who told her they could never be friends because of their ethnic differences. But Cynthia, determined by God's grace to overcome those differences, began what she called Project Love. Each week, she invited one of her coworkers to have lunch with her. She even designed special invitations for them, and so one by one, she began Project Love. That began to break down those barriers as her coworkers got to know her and vice versa. And the woman who declared they could never be friends—well, as it turns out, she has become a close friend and confidant of Cynthia's. Even though they no longer work together, they stay in touch, and Cynthia hears from her regularly.

Love never fails, my friends. If there are some difficult relationships where you work now, why don't you ask God for your own Project Love idea, instead of giving up on those relationships.