It’s week 3 of Making More Disciples: how are you doing?! It was inspiring to hear of the origins and development of ‘Tea and Toast’, and to be reminded of all the many ways Christians are showing Christ’s love in our church and the wider community. It’s not so hard to ‘witness’ like that, is it – and, God knows, it really is making a difference in people’s lives.

**What about the workers?**

All of the things we’ve looked at so far are voluntary acts of compassion and care – we can choose to get involved or not. But what about an area where most of us have, at some time in our lives, no choice but to be – in work?!

Let’s face it, work can be (and often is) a real challenge. The very word conjures an image of toil, effort, sweat – and that’s just the commuting! Although it can be really rewarding, we are also likely to experience frustration, disappointment, tensions, stress (I could go on!) at some points in our work. Can we really be a source of Christ’s love in such circumstances? Should we simply accept that work is a necessary evil, and that ‘proper witness’ only happens outside it?

Absolutely not! Work is a gift from God (yes, really!). He began it (remember: he rested on the seventh day but it he took six times as long creating!). He planned for us to do it (Gen 2:15) and, whatever kind of work it is, if we recognise that it has been given us by God and so do it to honour him we are serving Christ in it (Col 3:23-24).

When we see our work like that, as God’s ‘ordained ministry’ for us, then we can set about it with a new enthusiasm and purpose. We can be confident that Jesus is with us, inspiring our achievements and facing our challenges. With that outlook, we will inevitably influence our working environment for good. People will notice that we are different and will want to know why!

**This is Martyn’s story …**

Well, this is all great theory, I hear you say, but is it really possible in ‘real life’? Let me tell you about my experience then …

I got a job at Midland Bank straight from university, where I’d become a Christian less than a year earlier (saved by a fellow student who had befriended me – but that’s a story for another day!). Still in the first flush of faith, and not knowing a soul in this temple of mammon, I felt compelled to pray I’d meet other Christians. Within only a few weeks a poster appeared on the office noticeboard advertising a meeting for Christian fellowship and Bible study. It turned out to be the start of the Midland Bank Christian Fellowship, which continues to this day (nearly 45 years later) in the guise of Christians in HSBC, and spans the globe (that’s another story too!).

The strength and inspiration I gained from belonging to that fledgling group gave me the impetus I needed to start sharing my faith with my colleagues. It wasn’t ‘in your face’ preaching but general office chat soon exposed my faith (what I did outside work, what I believed about ways of living, etc.). There was often vigorous debate (and the occasional heated argument!) but people noticed, and one particular guy – whose lifestyle was poles apart from mine - found enough to spark his interest and a friendship with me. In a few weeks he had given his life to Christ, and went on to become a fervent Christian who himself has led many people to the Lord and become an ordained minister!

It’s true that this wasn’t the typical pattern of my working life – far from it! And I’m quite sure that it wasn’t the eloquence of my preaching that made the difference. What I do know is that it was God’s time for him, where a dissatisfaction with his own life came together with Spirit-inspired fervency in my own to create an unlikely bond between us which transformed his life. To God be the glory!

**Now it’s your turn!**

And so to your challenge (yes, you knew this was coming!). The same principles apply with any group of people you are involved with often, whether in the workplace or elsewhere (so interpret this paragraph in your own context). Make a point this week of praying for each of those you work closely with; don’t hide the Christian aspects of your life from them but, when the opportunity arises in general conversation, share what you get up to and what motivates you; and remind yourself each day that God has given you this job (whether you like it or not!) and you are serving Christ in doing it. Don’t get hung up on ‘witnessing’, but be yourself in Christ: that should be all the eloquence you need!

God bless you – and we’d love you to tell us how you are getting on!

*Produced by Martyn Read on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*