



# SHARING YOUR FAITH IN THE WORKPLACE

## SESSION TWO HOW YOU WALK

St Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel always, if necessary use words". The way we conduct ourselves, the way we walk is of great importance in sharing faith. If what we do does not match up with what we say, nobody will believe us, we will be seen as hypocrites.

We need to focus on **how we can love people in the work context**. The way we do our work, and the way we relate to others in our work environment will say as much about Christ as a fifteen minute discussion where we get to lay out the core principles of the gospel. Some practical things we can do to love people in our workplace:

- ▶ Be reliable – do what you say you will do
- ▶ Be on time – respect people's time
- ▶ Be thoughtful – try and take some extra work off overloaded colleagues
- ▶ Be generous – share food etc
- ▶ Be encouraging – say thankyou to people who help you out, even if they had to do it!
- ▶ Be people-focussed – put people before profit

If you are in management, you have extra opportunities to love people. God has put you in the position of authority that you have, because he loves the people who work for you. See them as your sheep, love and protect them. Do what you would do if you were their small-group leader! Love them, encourage them, build them up. Regularly meet with them one-on-one, really get to know them, listen to them. Show concern for them as people; be concerned about their work/life balance!!

We also need to **be realistic about the opportunities we will have on work premises**. Most people do not discuss the really deep and meaningful things of their life at work. Many of us have a fake "work persona", the person we are when we are being "professional". People are much more open in relaxed social settings. It will be much easier to build good relationships with people by having coffee / lunch / drinks with them off site than in the office. Make the most of social opportunities, invite people out for lunch and invest that time in building the relationship. As the relationship builds you will be naturally provided with opportunities to talk about your faith.

One of the most important things is to **be real**. We need to be transparent, and not hide what is going on in our lives, and the part God plays in that. We shouldn't pretend to be perfect, or that we have it all together, or that we have all the answers. We need to be honest about the challenges of Christian life, about doubts and about it being a journey. We shouldn't fake excitement, rather tell people the truth, straight and to the point, then let them freely decide what to make of it. Australians are cynical and if things are over-hyped they will smell a rat. We need to be true to who God made us, regardless of whether that fits the prevailing culture of our workplace.

As Christians it is easy to hide away from the world in a Christian-bubble. We really need to **engage with our culture** but bring a Christian perspective to it. Karl Barth said, "We must hold the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other." This is a great way of saying we need to know what is going on in the world as well as what the bible says. When we are discussing current issues or movies we will then be able to bring a perspective that is informed by the bible, but without necessarily having to say, "the bible says..." For example if discussing "Slumdog Millionaire" we might say, "I was disappointed by 'Slumdog Millionaire', I felt it trivialised the suffering of Indian slum dwellers, by concluding with a typical Hollywood 'got the girl, got the money, so everything is alright' ending".

### QUESTIONS

1. How much do you think about the idea that what you do and how you do it says as much to your colleagues about Jesus as if you got to talk to them about the gospel?
2. What are some practical changes you can make to the way you work that will better show love and appreciation for the people you work with?
3. What social opportunities do you currently have with colleagues? Do you go out for lunch? Or eat at your desk whilst working through lunch? How could you be more intentional about creating social opportunities outside the work premises with your colleagues?
4. How real are you at work? Do you wear a mask? What do you need to do to drop the mask and let people closer?