



Minding the Gap - June 2014

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

"Relationships"

One of the Incarnation faith community's eight big values is "Relationships". As a member of the Congregation Council, I was 'on point' for the devotion centered on "Relationships", at this month's meeting. So, after doing the meditation, I thought once again: "What if we were to apply this value into our work environment?" Is it even possible and would it enhance or encumber the work site? As you may guess, I thoroughly believe it would not only enhance the work site but also our individual lives because of the way God has made us.

Scripture gives us great insight about two characteristics with which the Creator has endowed us. First, in Genesis 1:31 does the writer say: "God saw everything that He had made and it was VERY GOOD". To reinforce that in Psalm 8:4ff, the writer expands with "...what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor." What this says is that the Creator has endowed us with a sense of needing to be "significant". We are not just an important, but even the pinnacle of His creation. Or, as one writer put it, "God don't make no junk!". The second characteristic is found in Genesis 2:18 where God says "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner". Thus, giving us the understanding that we're created with the need to "belong". In the Creator's wisdom we were not designed to do "life" alone, but in relationship with others - we 'belong' to one another.

It is my belief that these two characteristics, the need to be significant and the need to belong, can be taken into our work place and have a real impact on both relationships, and the amount and quality of work being accomplished. How might it impact your colleague or direct report if you ask them for information or help, rather than give direction or make a command? In the light of "God don't make no junk", what if you viewed them as capable of making appropriate decisions without asking your permission? - they were after all hired because of their skills. What if s/he knew they belonged to the team - an important member, and were allowed to make a mistake every now and then? How about us having an understanding that in order to let the creative and problem solving 'juices flow', s/he needs to have a sense of being needed? How are we doing in listening to the other? Do they have the sense that what they think and believe is of significance for us? And, in incidents of conflict, are we taking the time and energy to resolve them so individuals know they still belong to one another?

Well, these and many other questions will hopefully be a part of our work as we realize that because it is our very, God-created nature to be significant and to belong we must experience these elements in our daily living. And, that when we do we are equipped to reach far beyond ourselves, being more creative and becoming the person in which God delights.

Blessings to you in your work,

Jim Grubs

Incarnation Lutheran Church, 4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126