



Minding the Gap - January 2017

A Faith and Work Publication

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

"Goodness in Slowness?"

A couple of years ago, we were driving US 1 on the Florida Keys. As we moved along, my eyes caught the bumper sticker on the car in front of us "Slow Down You're Not on the Mainland!" For me it was both a challenge (I'm usually "pedal to the metal") and a relief (permission to not be in a hurry). It takes only a moment to realize that life is moving faster and faster. Examples?!: movie-"Fast and Furious"; explosion of fast food restaurants & preparation; "speed dating"; need for increasing internet speed; push for "instant gratification"; multitasking; "the 10 minute workout" to get in shape; etc. Yes, today's young parents are known as the "dawn-to-yawn" families because of something scheduled almost every moment of the day. Pastor Jeanne Hartfield of Incarnation Lutheran pointed out in a recent Sunday message, "Busyness is worn as a badge of honor" - a very poignant observation.

Then we encounter the world-of-work where the mantra is often "time is money". So, any thought of **not** 'packing in' as much as possible is suspect and viewed as counter-productive. As I've cited before, at work there is continual attention paid to efficiency rather than effectiveness - oh yes, we do need both. However, efficiency is often associated with **speed or being fast**. Author Carl Honore, "In Praise of Slow", has done research in this realm and states that speed or being fast correlates with being: "...busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed,

superficial, impatient, active, quantity-over-quality." While **slow** is: "calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity."

It doesn't take much of a 'step' to see that this second list of descriptors is key to establishing **strong relationships** with coworkers. In my time of overseeing the human resource work for Reell Corporation and as a dean within the student affairs division at Augsburg College, my greatest amount of both time and energy was spent around efforts to repair or improve **relationships**. We must continually remember within the most effective and efficient organizations exists healthy relationships. And, relationships take time...time to **notice**; time to **listen**; time to **speak the truth**; time to be **compassionate**; and on-and-on. Perhaps helpful is to practice Jeanne Hartfield's challenge of taking time to look behind the **doing** (activities, accomplishments) of a person to the **being** (created qualities) of a person.

We're all familiar with the story of Jesus at Mary and Martha's place and I believe it affirms the essence of what's been written above: "(Martha) had a sister named Mary who sat the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered, 'Martha, Martha you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part...'" (Lk. 10:39-42a). What a powerful lesson!

Yes, time is limited and valuable, but try using some of it to slow down; to notice your coworker and to 'look on them' with love.

Blessings in your 2017 world of work.

- Jim Grubs

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