

## ***BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS***

by Kent Humphreys

**Consider the following eight ways to build authentic relationships in the workplace:**

- Learn the *names of* people in your department or that you see on a regular basis at work.
- Use accepted *questions* such as "How are things going?" and build on the responses to discover someone's interests and distinctive.
- Recognize the *needs* people have in times of both suffering and success. There are needs to be understood and appreciated. Build on this time of openness to be a special friend.
- Don't take *breaks* or have *lunch* alone. Invite someone to join you, but keep it casual and light.
- Become an *interesting person* yourself. Read, listen, and watch what • going on locally, regionally, nationally, and worldwide.
- Be alert to areas of *common interest* as you meet various people, both for networking purposes and for developing your relationships. Most of us can make conversation easily about areas in which we share an interest, be it skiing, painting, children, family roots, or new software.
- Develop a list of people for whom you will pray regularly. Praying for people gives you a heart for them, and they sense your love and caring. A relationship is underway
- Establish and nurture such a relationship by regularly looking for ways to *serve* and *minister*. Such ministry will often occur during times of crisis (health problems, financial difficulties, issues with children and one's marriage, a friend or relative's death, stresses in the workplace). Our job as believers is to build relationships, pray and watch for opportunities. God will be faithful in giving these open doors to your leaders if they are sensitive to His leading and available to follow it.

Once your leaders visualize the open door, they can tactfully share Christ. Equip them to be able to do that. Teach them how to share their own experiences of meeting God and living with Him. It helps if they can initially write out a three-minute version of their own personal story and practice telling it to the group. That way, they have something they can share over coffee in a non-threatening way. You could also teach them how to use a tract, such as "Steps to Peace with God." or show them how to draw out the Bridge Illustration.

It is assumed in our culture that the Church impacts society *primarily as an institution*, or a bureaucracy. As a matter of fact — and New Testament teaching, especially — the *institutional impact of the Church in the world is minimal*. *Where is the Church between Sundays* when the buildings are empty except for pastor and staff? *The Church is everywhere! Scattered, like seed and salt . . .* penetrating all the neighborhoods, organizations, private clubs, etc. The impact of the institutional church on the culture is like dropping a saltshaker on food. In order to do its work, salt must be shaken from its container to make contact with the food . . . *disappearing as it penetrates*. When salt is doing its work, *it is invisible . . .* and the only way to measure its impact is by taste. When Jesus told the parable of the wheat and tares, in explaining it He said, "The Son of Man is the sower, the field is the world, the good seed are the children of the Kingdom." In fact, in a series of parables concerning the Kingdom, Jesus insisted that the *Kingdom is invisible in the world* — like "treasure hidden in a field." The real work of the Church takes place between *Sundays* — *when the Church is dispersed* — disappearing into the soil of the world around it. The impact of church institutions in the world is marginal. The *maxi-inurn impact* of the Church is when it is scattered — and invisible. And, incidentally, there is no way to measure this influence — no criteria. Jesus said that the wheat and the weeds were not to be separated until the harvest. ... And He said, "The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels"