



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

Get This Right!

I'm retired, so no more labor, right! Well, sort of. Now that I'm not "working" any more, I can work at the things I like to do. When that happens, it's not labor any more. But I do have work I have to do.

Three times a week I go to the gym, unless I can find a reasonably good reason to avoid it. To some degree this has become work, since I do it because I think I have to. I'm not a morning person so I have to make myself get up and get going. So, three times a week I tell myself, get up and get going. You have to do this for your own good. Your "pay" will be becoming a delightfully skinny "cutie" who can indulge in a sundae once in a while and not feel sinful!

Now, I know that's not gonna happen, but the dream keeps me from getting lazier than I already am. My doctor tells me I'm in good shape – she doesn't add "for the age I am" but I can hear that. And the gym thing keeps her from pushing me to lose weight.

Off the subject? Not really. Today is part of the Labor Day weekend but it is also a day when we speak of prayer and the reminders of prayer. Remember when we all got little dots to put on our cell phones or watches? There is still a remnant of mine on my watch. Sometimes our prayer life seems like labor. We will get to it when we have the time because it's hard to think about doing it.

That's an excuse like my looking for a reason to skip the gym! In fact, this can be more like being retired and now knowing that there is time to try to establish a pattern in our lives for prayer. Ten minutes or an hour – it makes no difference. Just do it!

We are not unlike the Jewish Orthodox men who wear phylacteries to remind them to pray. We have our “prayer dots” and many of us wear crosses around our necks or on our jackets. Are these just decorations or are they meaningful? I’ve got a drawer full of crosses of different sorts and from different places and each one has a meaning because it was a gift or made in a certain way or has an innate meaning for me. I try to wear one all the time and I hope it remains a reminder to me that when people see it they know I am a Christian and they expect a certain demeanor from me.

I remember the story of a car accident. The driver of the car that was hit came out of his seat and began to cuss out the driver in the car that hit him. To put it nicely, he used strong language and threatened harm to the driver in the rear. He was still going at it when a police officer came up to them. He looked at the driver of the front car and asked to see his license, car registration and the like.

“Why me? This is the guy at fault! What are you giving me such a hard time about?”

“Well,” the officer responded, “I see all these bumper stickers saying “Jesus is Lord”, “God bless America”, “Take your children to Church”, “God is love” and the name of a Church in this town as well. Hearing your response to this accident, I assumed you had stolen this car!”

“Blessed to be a blessing” is the sign many of us carry on our vehicles. Make sure that your life lives up to that image! Be a blessing. God loves you, too.

TMK

-- *Week of September 6, 2009*