

## **HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/16/2024**

### **Small Gestures Can Make a Difference**

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

This week I read a story about a man who was on a plane when some Army soldiers boarded. Soon into the flight, the announcement was made that box lunches could be purchased for \$5.00. The man heard two soldiers discussing whether to buy lunch for their long flight. Because their funds were limited, they decided to wait until they landed three hours later. The man got up and went to a flight attendant, gave her \$50.00, and asked that all the soldiers on the flight be given a box lunch. The flight attendant said that her son was in the military, and it was like he was doing this for her son. While distributing the box lunches, she brought the man a first-class meal. Three people came up to the man and each gave him \$25.00 because they wanted to help. He gave the money to the soldiers and told them to buy dinner for their guys when they landed. The pilot came out of the cockpit and as a former military pilot thanked the man.

I was struck by the significant difference we can make with just a small amount of effort. There are so many opportunities around us each day, but we often don't see them or choose to ignore them. Yet they can be such a powerful witness to our faith and can change the lives of others in ways we may never know.

The man in this story received a lot of attention for his gift, though that was not his reason for doing it. At other times, our actions may and perhaps should be done without accolade. Many years ago, my late wife, Lori, came home and said at the daycare where she worked she had been talking with a single mother. The mother had been offered a better job, one that would allow her to get off welfare and pay for the childcare herself. This would allow another household to receive the economic assistance. The problem was that she wouldn't get paid for two weeks and didn't have enough savings to cover the cost of daycare during that time. She was going to have to turn down the better job. After Lori and I looked at our bank accounts, she was able to go to the daycare the next day and tell the mother they had found an anonymous donor who would cover those two weeks for her. She was able to take the job and get her family off of welfare.

I realize by telling the story here, we may receive some praise, but that is not my purpose. Rather I just want to show how easy it can be to make a difference in the lives of others. When we lived in Wisconsin, we would occasionally drive on the Illinois Tollway. We started a practice that our kids enjoyed. When we approached a tollgate, we would go through a staffed gate, rather than a self-pay gate where you just through your coins in a receptacle to get the gate to rise. At the gates we chose, we would not only pay for ourselves but also the car behind us. It was fun to see the different reactions. Some would catch up and thank us. Some would just drive on as though they had gotten away with something. Some would race ahead of us so that they could pay for us at the next gate. I like to think that even that simple activity may have helped to change someone's day for the better, and perhaps make a positive impact on their life.

Small gestures can have surprising impressions on others. They may even allow us an opportunity to tell another about our faith and why we do such things. Try looking around and see if you can do some small gesture that will have an encouraging outcome on the life of someone else.

In CHRIST's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey