

## Where has God put you? – July 8, 2017

Jeff Steinke

- Today I wanted to talk about how God puts us in a variety of situations, jobs, and in contact with various people for a reason. And that listening to and communicating with Him through prayer plays a big part in how our interactions with those people turns out.
- I have been a Registered Nurse since 2010 so my workplace has been Healthcare. In Healthcare there are basically two kinds of people, patients and providers. As a nurse I am a provider, but in 2011 I became a patient.
- I woke up one morning and I had this bizarre sensation in my head. The best way I can describe it is a “strange dizziness’. It was bad enough that I ended up in the ER where they just said I had vertigo and I would be better in a week or two.
- Well, it got a little bit better and then in December of 2011 it got way worse.
- One night after going out to eat I started feeling really bad. The world was spinning around me, I was dizzy and extremely nauseous. I started projectile vomiting and even moving my head 1 mm threw me into an agony I can’t even describe.
- From that night on I was dizzy all the time. My eyes were extremely sensitive to light, especially artificial light from fluorescent light bulbs. I had to start wearing a cap and wrap around sunglasses everywhere I went.
- I was completely unable to work, I couldn’t exercise or play sports, and I felt totally worthless. So I turned to the medical community for answers.
- I saw 3 Neurologists, 3 Neurotologists, An Endocrinologist, a Neurophamologist
- Chiropractor, Acupuncturist, Neurologist specializing in migraines, Naturopathic Dr., Osteopathologist, and a Vestibular Physical Therapist
- I tried 15 kinds of medication from 2011-2015
- But no one could figure out what was going on.
- Finally in 2015 I just went to establish a primary care Dr. and I was describing my symptoms and she had seen it once before.
- She printed off a medical journal article about Chronic Subjective Dizziness and it matched with a lot of the symptoms that I was experiencing.

- The last year I've felt like I am finally getting my life back. I've been working full time, I've been able to play sports again, and I almost feel normal through the majority of the day.
- I tell you all this because this dark health experience totally affected the way I approach my everyday life.
- For one, I am extremely grateful to have a job and to be physically able to work. Try to imagine for a second not being able to work...
- Some of you are thinking, hmm that might be pretty nice. But there is a big difference *between not having to work, and not being able to work.*
- Most of us take even having a job totally for granted. But I found out when I was trying to get back into nursing full time, you can be totally qualified and certified with experience but getting a job is not guaranteed.
- A certain hospital organization wouldn't even interview me because they said that I had been out of bedside nursing for over a year.
- So for me now, I am so grateful to ONE: be physically able to work, and TWO: just have a job. I am so thankful, that everyday when I head to work in the morning I turn off my radio and I pray my entire commute.
- What I do is, there are three Orlando Health hospitals at the health village where I work. ORMC, Arnold Palmer and Winnie Palmer. God has put me there so I look at it as I have a responsibility as a Christian to not only work in a way that would bring glory to God, but also to pray regularly for this institution and these people.
- So I pray for protection for those three hospitals and all the medical buildings in between. I pray every morning for the patients that are waking up that morning whose lives have totally changed. I pray for the family members who are at the end of their ropes.
- I pray for the doctors, the nurses, therapists, the environmental service works, the food service workers, administration, the security officers.
- I pray that God would push back the evil one so that His will would be done there that day.
- When they first told me that the topic for this series was "Faith in the Workplace", I immediately thought of evangelism.
- And two weeks ago when Molly was sharing about all her experiences when she was selling books door to door, and after a few minutes her and these strangers would be hugging and

crying and praying together. I was like, Wow...I really hope she's lying a little bit. Cause I don't have stories like that.

- I had to do door to door evangelism in Southern California when I was doing field school for Seminary. But I did not have the same kind of experiences. The only person crying was me. And that was from getting doors slammed in my face or just from the constant awkwardness of the interactions I was having.
- Don't get me wrong, God obviously uses people like Molly in those kinds of ways.
- But I think it's ok if you can't go door to door. God may want to just use you in the place where you work.
  
- What kind of workplace or school has God put you in? Wherever it is I believe that God has placed you there for a reason.
- Maybe you will only be there a short time, perhaps you'll retire there. But right now you are there.
- What kind of Christian are you going to be? Would your colleagues say you are a pleasant person? Or do they only know you as that person who looks down upon them because they go out for drinks after work Friday evening or go outside for a smoke break throughout the day.
- On my hospital unit my co-workers know that I can be a little bit goofy. But most of them also know that I go to church on Saturday of all days and that I have an upper level religion degree.
  
- And just a couple weeks ago one of the LPN's I was working with was asking me a question about the Bible.
- The only way in which many of the people we work with will see God, is by the way in which we live our lives.
- We are the letters of scripture in many cases. We are God with skin on. It's not always about sharing what the 2800 day prophecy is all about or giving them a tract on clean and unclean foods.
- Sometimes the most Godly thing you can do is sit down and listen to a co-worker whose spouse just left them. Or just be a compassionate presence to your colleague who is totally stressed out.

- Story of young man who had just lost his father in Nigeria
- In that case I had no idea what I should do, but I think God helped me support that young man the best way I could at that moment.
- There are other times that our best Christian efforts don't always work out.
- There was a period where I had a Masters of Divinity but I was working as a nursing assistant at a nursing home.  
Story of transferring Slovak lady to bed
- But I still believe God put me at that nursing home for a time for a reason.
- God needs his people everywhere.
- I may not think that we have to be super in-your-face with others about our Christianity but I do think we need to be majorly in God's face in terms of praying for the people we work with and see regularly.
- This goes back to how I was saying earlier that I pray every morning for that entire Orlando Health village, every day that I drive in to work.
- I also have a physical place at work where I picture God. We have two medication rooms on our floor that are locked.
- Most of the time when you go in there you are alone so I have picked that place as a little bit of sanctuary that just kind of reminds me that God is there, even at Orlando Health.
- In the mornings I also pray for the city of Orlando. Think of the couple million people that are in the extended Orlando area. How many of them have absolutely no connection to God?
- What if praying for the people of Orlando actually helped some of those people in some little way?
- Or what about the people in your neighborhood? Have you ever prayed for them?
- What if God tries to tell us certain things to say or do for people that we interact with? Are we even listening for that?

- Most of us would agree that the Christian walk is all about having a relationship with God right? The interesting thing is, good relationships involve communication, and communication requires both **talking** and **listening**.
- I heard a great quote recently.
- “Do you listen? Or are you just waiting to speak?”
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- And this doesn’t just apply to God communicating to us who we should pray for, it applies to our whole life. Just listening for God’s direction.
- If we truly believe God’s plan would be the best way we could live our lives why don’t we spend more time listening to try and discern what that plan is?
- When Jesus was here on earth He regularly sought out solitude to connect with God and get direction for his life.
- Jesus started His ministry by spending 40 days alone in the desert in Matt. 4
- Before He chose the 12 disciples He spent the entire night alone in the desert hills in Luke 6.
- When he received the news of John the Baptists’ death, he withdrew to a lonely place apart from others in Matthew 14
- After the miraculous feeding of the 5000 Jesus went up into the hills to spend some time alone, also Matthew 14
- With three disciples Jesus sought out the silence of a lonely mountain as the stage for the transfiguration in Matthew 17
- And as Jesus’ ministry on earth was drawing to a close He sought out the solitude of the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26.
- Illustration of GPS for farming
- This is a perfect illustration for us listening to God. Just like God, those Global Positioning Satellites are always there, but it takes something to “listen” for the signal.
- We can try to steer our own way around on earth without listening, but God has the exact coordinates for how we can be the most useful and beneficial we could possibly be.
- The last point I wanted to present here today is, “What if God actually needs our prayers?”

- In his fictional books, “This Present Darkness” and “Piercing the Darkness” author Frank Peretti presents a contemporary view of spiritual warfare between angels and demons and their battle for influence amongst the humans in which both groups are interested in.
- I first read these books shortly after I had become a Christian in my early 20’s and I was intrigued by how Peretti was presenting this spiritual warfare that the Bible also talks about.
- In both books the strength and boldness of the heavenly angels is impacted by when and how many Christians are praying.
- At different points the angels talk about not being able to engage the enemy because they do not have enough “prayer cover”.
- The books are not theologically flawless but they gave me a totally different perspective of prayer and how important our part could be in this cosmic battle.
- Richard Foster also believes that God needs our prayers. In his book Celebration of Disciplines Foster states,

*“In our efforts to pray it is easy for us to be defeated right at the outset because we have been taught that everything in the universe is already set, and so things cannot be changed. And if things cannot be changed, why pray? We may gloomily feel this way, but the Bible does not teach that. The Bible pray-ers prayed as if their prayers could and would make an objective difference. The apostle Paul gladly announces that we are ‘co-laborers with God’; that is we are working with God to determine the outcome of events (1 Cor. 3:9)”*

- There are multiple places in the Bible that support this line of thinking. And I just wanted to share a couple examples.
- In Exodus 32 the Israelites created a golden calf and worshipped it in place of God. The Lord was furious and threatened to destroy them. But Moses begged and pleaded for God to have mercy and the Bible says, “So the Lord changed his mind and spared them”.
- Like the Israelites, the people of Nineveh also experienced God relenting from His plan of destruction after they turned towards Him:
- Jonah 3:10 says, “When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.”

- With both the Israelites and the Ninevites, God chose to spare them in response to human prayers and repentance. I believe our prayers are extremely important and are needed in the spiritual battle that goes on around us every day.
- In closing, I believe God has put us all in specific situations where we have a tremendous opportunity to impact the people around us. So I want to challenge each of you this week. Most of us in this room live in the greater Orlando area. For the next 7 days I challenge each of you to listen for God's guidance, and then pray for the city of Orlando.
- Maybe God will have you pray for the city officials, or pray for the law enforcement workers, or maybe He wants you to pray for the people you live beside that you have never even talked to. But let's try to release the power of heaven here in Central Florida this week.



7.8.17

1. What kind of person do the people you work with or go to school with think you are and why? What areas could you improve on?
2. Who are the first people that come to mind when thinking about praying for your co-workers?
3. Where is a quiet place and time you could take at least 30 minutes to listen for what God would like to say to you?
4. How do you feel about the notion that God needs our prayers?
5. What are some specific things or people you could pray for in our city of Orlando?



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