

TTT Time

Mark Greene reflects on how 120 seconds on a Sunday can change the week...

I remember the day I first heard this idea. Not in quite the same way I remember where I was when Bobby Kennedy was murdered (doing a school entrance exam in Rutland), or where I first met my wife (the dining room at the London School of Theology), but still I remember the first day I heard this idea with some clarity; and, indeed, with great gratitude.

I'd been doing a workshop on 'How to Support the Workers' for Methodist ministers. As ever, with a keen eye on the next workshop and the next book, I had been soliciting ideas from the practitioners (if you have any, do let me know – mark.greene@licc.org.uk). One of the ministers, whose face is still imprinted on my memory, told me about TTT. I've been passing it on ever since, but it's only recently that I've realised why it is quite so effective.

Here's how it works. During a normal Sunday worship service, perhaps as little as once a month, the leader interviews one of the congregation for two minutes. He/she asks the interviewee two, three, or maybe four questions about their daily occupation, about what they will be

doing TTT – 'This Time Tomorrow'. The questions can be really simple: What do you do? What are your challenges/ joys? How can we pray for you?

The interviewees do not need to be the Chief of Police, the CEO of IBM or the England fly half. In fact, even if you happen to have the Chief of Police, the CEO of IBM and the current England fly half in your congregation, it's usually best to start with people doing ordinary work in ordinary places, and to include people whose daily occupation may not be paid – a housewife, or a retired person involved in a variety of purposeful activities.

This simple practice tends to have a range of transformative benefits.

First, it acknowledges, affirms and honours the interviewee. It tells them that what they do every day is important to the leader, important to the church, and important to God. It makes the ordinary person the hero – and you can tell a church's culture by its heroes, who it chooses to celebrate.

Secondly, as TTT follows TTT month by month, the whole congregation recognises ever more deeply that ordinary Christians doing ordinary things are important to God – even if some people never get to share from the front. These stories and prayer requests become part of the way the church does life together, part of the culture. And you can tell the culture of a church by the stories it tells and the prayers it prays.

Thirdly, TTT creates new conversations. It gives people who didn't know the interviewee an easy way to talk to them, and perhaps to share similar challenges or pertinent insight or encouragement.

Fourthly, it not only triggers new conversations it triggers a new kind of conversation. Issues that are often considered to be off the spiritual agenda – work, futility, failure, success, daily relationships, mission in daily life – issues that people feel that they can't really talk about at church are validated as legitimate topics for conversation and prayer. In sum, TTT serves to build a community concerned with all of life.

Last November, Emmanuel, Northwood, a fairly large Anglican community, instituted a workplace month (work is one of their eight areas of mission). They took a lot of initiatives: preached on work at every service, visited people on their frontlines, put on a special early morning prayer meeting, and in every service did TTT. Mike Talbot, the church's leader, said that TTT had probably had the most impact. It's an impact that was almost certainly increased by the way they handled the post-interview prayer time. In each instance, the leader invited anyone who had identified with the issues raised by the interviewee to stand when the interviewee was prayed for. And many did.

Imagine the conversations that ensued.

And imagine how it might feel for you to have the whole church praying for you in your daily occupation for the very first time. Imagine the difference it might make to you on your frontline, and the frontlines of the people in your church.



TTT is one of a host of ideas you can find in Supporting Christians at Work by Mark Greene, available from LICC at £5.

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