

BLESSING OF A WORKPLACE

P. Peace to this place and to all who enter here. (If possible, a candle is lighted.)

Our Lord Jesus often visited people in their workplaces: Simon Peter and Andrew when they were fishing, James and John in their boat mending the nets, the Samaritan woman at the well, Levi at his tax booth and in the market place. He told stories about people's work as illustrations of God's rule: A sower planting seeds, reapers at the harvest time, a woman baking bread, a merchant in search of fine pearls. Jesus said: *You are the light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl; they put it on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the place. In the same way let your light shine before people, so they will see the good things you do and give praise to God.*" (Matthew 5:14-16)

P. Let us pray

O God, (as this candle burns) cause your light to shine upon this place and all who work here. Scatter any darkness. Protect and guide those who work here in ways of justice and truth. Make it a healing light and bring right relationships and mutual respect for co-workers and customers/clients alike. Make this a warm and hospitable work place. Fill it with love and laughter. Bless this work done here, giving it meaning and purpose, granting productivity and success. From where-so-ever paychecks come, help us to remember that every good and perfect gift comes from you and you are a faithful, steadfast provider. So enable those who work here to be your light in the world, that all who enter this place for any reason will know your care and compassion; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

R. Amen. *(Other prayers may be said, including prayers for a specific worker and/or work space or equipment. The Lord's Prayer may be said.)*

P. The Lord watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth and forever more.

R. Amen.

(Created by Pastor Scott Dunfee, St. Luke's, Walnut Creek, California)

A WORKPLACE VISIT STORY

Members of St. Luke's, Walnut Creek, California were used to the idea of house blessings. These had been conducted in the homes of members before. But now their pastors, Scott Dunfee and Sherri Delvin, were offering to bless their work places.

The offer was extended as an outgrowth of an Epiphany sermon series. Worshipers received tokens to remind them of the sermons each week: a sea shell on the Baptism of Our Lord, then a packet of salt, another of yeast and a votive candle for light. These tokens were collected in clear plastic boxes and topped with a workplace prayer.

One of the first to take Pastor Dunfee up on the offer was a watch commander in the county prison. He asked for the blessing because he "wanted all the help he could get." The two met for prayer in the watch commander's office. Then they toured the prison with the intent that each step they took was a prayer, claiming that place in the name of God. They did not interrupt the work of others, but they did meet co-workers who were interested in the fact that the sheriff's pastor was there. Scott parted from these introductions with the words "God bless you." He felt his prison was very warmly received.

Next, Scott visited a grocery store where a member enters on the price codes in the computer and sets it up for scanning. She had asked the manager's permission to invite her pastor and told others that he was coming. In fact, she collected prayer requests from some of her fellow employees. Some requests showed concern for morale. Others asked for help with prejudice because the store's location is in an ethnically diverse spot and has customers using food stamps. Again, the two walked through the store without disturbing the activity around them. They talked about God's creative power and the work of people who provided the food surrounding them. They talked about all the people who frequent the store. They also walked out to the parking lot where they prayed that it might be a safe place, especially at night.

Pastor Delvin described two work place blessings, also. One was done very privately. Sherri visited the rehearsal of a college musical and said prayers of blessing the accompanist during a break. Afterwards, the musician said that she had understood the concept of ministry in daily life all along, but this made it feel present. And it has made some difference since in interactions with students.

Then, Sherri visited her husband's re-located 3-person office. She took a plant as a gift for the entryway. This was a public event. She talked with her husband and has colleagues about their shared vision of the company's growth and blessed each workroom. One of the results of the visit that Sherri reports is a lot of attention to caring for the plant. It's become a symbol of the workplace blessing.

Submitted by St. Luke's Walnut Creek, California