

TNO Fall 2019 newsletter

Dear friends and co-laborers in Christ, welcome to the Fall 2019 issue of the TNO newsletter. Thank you for your prayers and unwavering support to the expansion of God's kingdom. We are grateful to God for he has enabled us to complete another season in serving Him, by serving our neighbors. This month we took some time to re-examine the reasons why we gather to serve every Thursday. Why do we come to TNO? Do we come to serve, to fellowship, to



delve into the word? This month we asked volunteers why they show up on a perfectly good Thursday evening to spend several hours in a ministry that serves the homeless and disenfranchised, many of whom live at our doorstep. Popular answers included 'to serve the homeless, those who are practically our "neighbors" on the Common', 'to fellowship with friends', 'to help expand the ministry' and the like.

Trend experts say that the more 'high tech' a society becomes the more 'high touch' we crave, explains Tim Keller, in a sermon titled, "Knowing the Father". In big cities, we want to experience more personal touch. We want to talk to real people not machines. However, gone are the days when people had a single job and lived in the same neighborhood for life. Today, we change jobs more frequently to advance our careers. Likewise, employers move and evolve rapidly to keep companies competitive in the market. The more often we change that which is familiar -jobs, communities, neighbors, the less we feel like people, and more like objects. How does this affect our perception of God our Father? Does He seem like a distant being, removed from our daily life, and the suffering of this world?

During our weekly Bible Studies at TNO, we are constantly reminded that the mission and focus of TNO is to serve the King of Kings, and His Kingdom. The sole purpose of TNO is to serve our Lord. We come to serve because of the unconditional love God has for us. We do not come to serve a distant being but a Father who loves us. This love then makes us want to express our profound gratitude in service to our God.

In the midst of our busy lives, however, does His love for us seem remote, like sunshine on a winter's day that lacks warmth? If so, how do we draw near to Him? Our ultimate objective as Christians, and thus our reason to serve, can then be distilled to a single compelling point. It is to know the Father, intimately. For in service to the least of our brethren we serve the Lord Himself (Matt 25:40).

Keller points out that the real problem today is our lack of a personal knowledge of God. Keller presents the analogy of a knotted string of thread. It appears to be twisted, caught, and unable to come free into a single length of string. Knowing God is like pulling on that single twist in the string that makes it come suddenly free, untangling it from the knot. Personal knowledge of God is the same, he says, it relieves the "log jam" of our problems.

A telltale sign to judge for ourselves if we have a personal knowledge of God is this, says Keller, when we do things that affect how we live, then, we have crossed over from the informational knowledge of God to the personal. We need to strive to have an intimate, personal relationship with the Father. Just as Jeremiah 9:24 reads, "but let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me...", if we wish to boast, let us boast in our personal knowledge of God. This is the very definition of life. There is truly nothing compared to the satisfaction of knowing God. Jesus came so that we may know God intimately. Finally, in John 14, Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (v15). We cannot know God personally without knowing the Bible. We cannot know Him without submitting our entire self to Him as Lord of our life. The heart of a person is where his treasure is. Let us then place our treasure upon Him, and make Him our ultimate treasure.

If we had a billion dollars in savings, will we worry about a small financial burden? We have a greater treasure in Christ. Jesus is your ultimate treasure. Paul says he counts everything as nothing compared to the treasure I have in Christ. Let us set Him apart, and honor Him. If Christ is your ultimate treasure, you will not lose hope, or be depressed. Let us then rejoice for our names are in the lamb's book of life. Let us rejoice in Jesus, as our highest treasure.

With this in mind we provided food, drink, socks and clothes to a number of those in need on the Common. We had a good turnout and were able to give away several plates of food and pairs of socks. It was also a time of fellowship. Our goal at TNO has always been to build lasting relationships with the people we serve, and not simply to provide a meal. In the past, the transactional aspect of the outreach has been an avenue to provide other forms of support to those we serve, such as help with finding accommodations, job applications and interviews, help with legal and healthcare matters. One of our volunteers has been making strides in reaching the Chinese population that gather on the Common using a system of Bible verses written out in Mandarin, which she asks them to read before receiving their socks. We were also overjoyed to welcome back many of our faithful volunteers who had been away for the summer.

It is not uncommon for us to walk away at the end of TNO more refreshed than when we first came in. This Fall was no exception. Until our next meeting, may we get to know God more personally than we have in the past. Have a wonderful rest of the Fall, dear friends.

Praise and Prayer reports

We are thankful that God provided us a number of faithful volunteers who were an extension of the Lord's hands in serving the community and showing the love of God.

The Chinese community that usually joins us every Thursday was introduced to the Gospel through a volunteer who has come up with a method to teach key Bible verses in Mandarin.

A number of clothing donations were received and distributed to those in need, particularly winter clothing.

Pray that we will receive more clothing donations this month as the winter months are upon us and there is a great need for winter clothing.

Announcements

Church will be closed for Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 28th, therefore we will not meet for TNO.

Annual Christmas Backpacking Event will be held on Sunday December 1st after the 4 pm service.

The TNO Annual Christmas Event will be held on Thursday December 19th.

We look forward to your continued prayer and support as we continue to serve the Lord.

In Christ
The TNO team