

The Upper Room^[1] devotional reflection for Wednesday, April 7, 2021 comes to us from Teddy Rollins of Georgia

Matthew 22:34-39 **34** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” **37** Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 28:20(NIV) Jesus said, “Surely I am with you always.”

“Commitment”

Years ago, a church-planting friend advised me that the key to growing a successful church is to remain focused on Jesus’ command to love God and one another and his instruction to make disciples. As we prepared to launch our new church, we wanted to stay focused on these principles. The journey has been anything but easy, but Jesus reminds us daily, “I am with you always”

At our church, we try to think about reaching one person, one family, at a time. So every day our church is intentional about meeting new people – sharing our story and, more importantly, listening to theirs. We go regularly to schools, movie theaters, restaurants, bars, parks, and community outings – listening. And as we listen, loving connections are formed.

Our commitment to loving God and neighbor and to making disciples has helped us to grow a strong church.

Prayer Focus: Pastors of New Churches.

Prayer: Dear God, give us the strength daily to share your story of love with another person. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Thought for the Day: In what small way can I show love to a neighbor today?

--Teddy Rollins

Friends –

This question in Teddy Rollins “Thought for the Day” is a simple, clear call for each of us to be aware as we come in contact with others, whether virtually or in-person.

This author also reminds us that often the most effective way to show love to others is to simply “listen” to them. We might hear about happiness or confusion or anger or sadness or grief or frustration or fear or ... Whatever we hear, the one to whom we are listening, has felt “heard”, and our presence becomes a reminder that Christ is always with each of us, no matter what.

--Pastor bea

¹ <https://www.upperroom.org/>