

SAYING GRACE BEFORE MEALS

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Gordon works for a pharmaceutical company. He is responsible for the sale of antibiotics to the various community hospitals. One time he called me up and invited me for lunch.

"I want to arrange for you to speak to a group of rural doctors about our new antibiotic," he said on the phone.

So we decided to meet at a nearby restaurant for lunch.

Because of the time restraint, we quickly settled and placed our orders. Gordon started explaining to me what he had in mind. He was hoping to gather some twenty rural physicians from eastern Manitoba for an evening presentation. Dinner would be served following the talk. Since I have had some experience in this area, he hoped to find a suitable date that I could do it for his company.

Then our food order arrived. I had my fried chicken and he ordered some ribs.

With my head bowed down, I naturally closed my eyes and blessed the food. I didn't think I prayed for more than two minutes.

"Is everything alright?" The waitress asked in a rather anxious voice.

"Oh, Yes. The chicken looks delicious." I answered.

"You were staring so closely at the chicken, I thought..." She was perplexed.

"I was just saying grace..." I explained, Gordon could not hold back his giggle.

"I hope you didn't mind me praying.. ." I wasn't sure why I was apologizing to him.

"Of course not. I should have waited for you before starting." It was his turn to apologize.

The lunch discussion went very smoothly.

I subsequently did the presentation for Gordon's company and it was well received.

Then, one day, Gordon called again and wanted to meet me for lunch. So we quickly agreed to meet in the same restaurant. I asked for my favorite chicken and he again ordered the ribs.

When the food arrived, I simply bowed my head down and prayed.

This time, Gordon not only waited for me before eating, he actually had his hands folded while I blessed the food.

He told me that the physicians from eastern Manitoba continued to thank him for arranging that talk which I gave. Some could not make it to the talk and would like to get a copy of my notes..

"Why, certainly! My notes do not really contain any original research as you know. I have simply tried to summarize the current reports in the literature."

"That is probably why they like it. Many of them do not have time to review the medical journals."

About a month later, Gordon phoned again. This time he sounded rather different.

"I don't know if I should feel happy or sad." He mumbled.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"They are moving me to the head office in Toronto next week!"

"That means you have been promoted. Congratulations."

"I just want to thank you for all your help... can we have lunch together tomorrow?" He asked rather sheepishly.

"Of course. I would like to see you once more before you move to the big city."

We decided to go to our favorite restaurant and have our usual lunch orders.

Right after I had finished saying grace and was about to eat, he started

telling me about his background. He grew up in a Catholic family and had attended different churches of various denominations.

"Some of them had great lectures but others gave very boring sermons. I particularly like those with nice music." He openly shared his experiences with me.

I took the opportunity to give him the address of a close Christian friend living in Toronto.

"If you are really interested in the Christian faith, he will be able to help you."

"That is why I like you so much. During our training as sales representatives, we had been told never force our opinion on others. It is much better simply to present the facts and let the other party decide for himself. You are obviously a serious Christian and yet you don't get pushy with your religion. I think you would make a great salesman." He continued.

"I tried to sell encyclopedia one summer while studying in college and I almost starved to death." I said jokingly and we both laughed.

Gordon shook my hand very warmly before we parted that day. I know he would continue his search for the real faith. Amazing how it all started with a simple prayer before lunch. 