



OPINION

This Christmas Reach Out

A characteristic of farmers who manage stress well is that they have people they can turn to for emotional support. This support might come from family, church members, friends or other farmers who have experienced the same kind of stress.

"People who manage stress well talk about their problems with trusted friends," says University of Delaware Extension family specialist Dr. Patricia Tanner Nelson. "Regular, informal get-togethers with friends can be a life-saver."

As one farmer puts it, "Around the table is where you get the gripes out. And you always find that there's somebody who's got a worse problem than you."

Researchers have found that people who lack close relationships are four times as likely not to live their normal life expectancy as those with close relationships.

"You can be a 'friend indeed' when you provide emotional support for someone who's going through a difficult time," Nelson says.

What do you say when you don't know what to say?

When a friend or relative is experiencing trouble--such as financial losses, divorce, serious illness or death in the family--it's easy to stay away or remain silent because you don't know the right words to say. But look at it from his or her point of view, the specialist says. During hard times, things seem even worse when friends and family stay away.

Nelson offers the following suggestions on how to offer help in an awkward situation.

Instead of asking "How are you?" as soon as you greet someone, chat for a few minutes. Then pause and say, "How are you doing?" or "How are things going?" When you inquire right away, the person may not realize that you really want an answer. But before you ask the question, be sure you have time to listen.

Send the person a note to let him or her know you care. You might start it with something like, "I've been thinking about you and wonder how you're doing." Letting the person know you care can make a big difference, Nelson says. You might suggest getting together for coffee in a few days. Then be sure to call and follow through.

Be aware of especially stressful times for the person, such as an appointment with a lawyer, a doctor or a banker. Call a few hours later to see how things went. Your caring may help the person cope with bad news.

Let the person know you're not

trying to snoop but only want to be a support. It may help to say something like, "I don't want to butt into your affairs, so tell me if I'm getting too personal and I'll drop it." That makes it clear you want to help, but only if he or she wants to talk.

Confidentiality is essential. Let the person know that what is said is between you two, even if you aren't specifically asked not to repeat the information. If you can't keep a confidence, it's better not to listen to personal comments.

Find a time and place where you won't be interrupted and where others can't eavesdrop. If necessary, you may want to suggest another time or place, if the present circumstances don't offer enough privacy.

Or say you'll drop by sometime to chat. Perhaps you can stop by when you know the person will be working in the farm shop, or bring along some donuts and suggest he or she make some coffee to go with them.

Remember that it may be difficult for someone who needs help to bring up the subject. He or she may not want to bother you. You need to let the person know that you want to listen.

Sometimes a physical gesture like an arm around the shoulder or a hug may say more than any words.

At a time of great personal loss or tragedy, it may be enough to go to the person and say, "I don't know what to say," or "I want you to know I'm thinking of you." The person in crisis doesn't need advice or even words of wisdom, but rather your caring and your presence. To reach out is part of the Christmas Spirit. We'll all want to extend this kind of reach to 365 days of the year.



Farm

Calendar

Tuesday, January 5

Dairy Nutrition School, Eastern Lancaster County, Gap Fire Hall, 9:45 a.m.
Schuylkill Co. Dairy Day, PSU Schuylkill Campus, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, January 6

Lancaster Conservation District Dinner meeting, Stock Yard Inn, 6 p.m.



NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent

To Check Barn Ventilation

Proper ventilation of all types of livestock and poultry buildings is very important during the winter months. When the warm, moisture-laden air is not moved out of the area, we usually see condensation on the windows, walls and ceilings. This is especially true with little or poor insulation. Exhaust fans will move the air out, and protect the building. During this time of year barns are filled with livestock; these animals give off large amounts of body heat. When condensation occurs it is a sign that some attention is needed; in most cases it is a problem with ventilation or with insulation.

To Review Your Will

I don't know of anything that changes more than our tax laws. As these changes take place we must review our personal affairs. First, a thorough examination of your will should be done; second, examine how you own property; and third, check for application of the new tax laws to determine

savings.

Everyone should have their will thoroughly reviewed if it hasn't been done since September 1981. One major point of the review should be to determine ways of applying the new unlimited federal estate tax marital deduction.

Any amount of property can now be transferred tax-free to a spouse at death. However, this option should be considered carefully, medium and large estates may pay more tax if the entire estate is passed to the surviving spouse.

Consult your attorney about making necessary changes.

To Protect Orchard Fruit Trees

While most of the hard work for fruit growers may be over, it is that time of the year for mice, deer and rabbits to get busy.

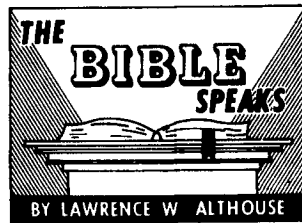
On young trees preventative measures are necessary. The most effective way to prevent rabbit damage is to use tree trunk guards on individual trees. Cylinders of 1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth 18 to 24 inches high, set into the ground surrounding the tree, will help prevent gnawing damage to the main stem.

Another way to keep rabbits and

deer from chewing branches and buds is to "paint" tree trunks and limbs with a mixture of 5 to 6 pounds of powdered rosin in one gallon of ordinary alcohol. Simply use a whitewash brush to apply the material. The rabbits and deer find the rosin too gritty and aside from an occasional nip will usually leave the tree alone. Be sure to apply the material to a height well above the reach of the deer.

To Be Aware Of Tax Reporting Timetables

Farmers planning to estimate what their tax is going to be for 1987 should file form 1040ES by January 15. If you file your Estimated Return by January 15, you have until April 15 to file a complete tax return on Form 1040 and pay any tax still due or request a refund if they overpaid in making the tax estimate. However, farmers who do not file and pay an estimated tax must file the completed 1040 form by March 1 and pay in full whatever tax is due at that time. Non-farmers have until April 15 to complete their 1040 and pay any tax due. Farmer's Tax Guides are available at the Extension Office to assist in filing your reports.



"FOLLOW ME!"
December 27, 1987

Background Scripture: Matthew 4.

Devotional Reading: Acts 10:34-3.

No matter how many times I've read Matthew's account of the call of Peter, Andrew, James and John, it still strikes me at every reading with its simplicity and power. Whenever I get bogged down in the intricacies and complexities of Christian life, I need to remember the way in which Jesus recruited these four disciples: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Later, as they trudged up and down Galilee, he would explain and demonstrate what he meant when he said "Follow me." But on the day when he first spoke these words by the Sea of Galilee, that was all he said. If they wanted to know more about that to which he was calling them, they had but one choice: to follow him.

Writers have often suggested that there was more to this experience than Matthew tells us. Perhaps these men had heard Jesus preach and teach previously. Maybe he had already talked to them about discipleship and what it would require. But, regardless, the simplicity and power remain. Jesus says, "Follow me . . ." and Matthew tells us "Immediately they left their nets and followed

him" (4:20).

WHERE WE WORK

Note that Jesus did not invite those who were learned in the law, nor those who had a reputation for being strict followers of the law. Instead, he chose as his closest followers men engaged in common occupations. They were fishermen, a rather common occupation in Galilee. Their training and skill were in catching fish. What did they know of religion that their fellow citizens did not know? Furthermore, Jesus came to these men in the midst of their everyday occupation. While they were still working with their nets, Jesus came and said, "Follow me . . ."

So it is even today. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with what the world judges to be either "learned" or "righteous." There is no I.Q. test for new disciples, no credit check, no agreement to submit to a polygraph (lie detector) test. One does not need to "be put up for membership" by one or more prominent citizens, nor does Jesus ask for a resume or "references." What Jesus is looking for are persons who will affirmatively respond to his invitation to "Follow me." And he comes to us where we live and work — in our offices, our stores, our factories, and our homes.

After these four men responded to his call and followed him, he showed them what he was calling for them to do in their discipleship. They were to do what he did and they saw that his ministry was intended for the minds, bodies and spirits of those who came to him. Matthew tells us: "And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (4:23).

Few of us are called to be clergy, but that doesn't mean that the discipleship to which he calls everyone is anything less than that to which he called these four men. Wherever we are, whatever our circumstances, whatever our talents and training, we can teach and preach the good news of Jesus Christ in our own way and be channels of his healing power in the world.

That's what he means when he says, "Follow me . . .!"

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