

Dearest Friends of Alpha!

When you have been at Alpha over 29 years you get to reflect on what you have learned in all those years. Right?

Ecclesiastes 3:1 Everything on Earth has its time and its own season.

3:9-13 What do we gain by all our hard work? I have seen what difficult things God demands of us. God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all He has done, and He puts questions in our minds about the past and the future. I know the best thing we can do is always enjoy life, because God's gift to us is the happiness we get from our food and drink and the work we do. CEV

In verse 9 Solomon asks what have we gained by all our hard work. So I would like to spend some time reviewing what my work at Alpha has taught me.

Ministering at Alpha has caused me to be much more dependent on God's for wisdom. He allows circumstances beyond my control or experience when counseling people with serious problems. Frequently, I silently pray James 1:5 asking God for wisdom! He has promised if we ask He will never get tired of answering that prayer. On many occasions I have been surprised at what comes out of my mouth and I am fully aware that this thought wasn't something I knew before.

Ministering at Alpha has caused me to live dependant on God for our finances both personally and for the ministry. Starting in 1993 Alpha stopped charging for counseling. Even now people are surprised and appreciative of our commitment to help people without pressure to pay a fee. I once had a man tell me that he was in a mental ward at a hospital and the doctor told him he needed continued counseling. When he stated he couldn't afford to pay for counseling then the doctor said "well I release you from the hospital then". Later this man came to Alpha because of our commitment to help people and he accepted Christ as Savior. Philippians 4:19 states - *"My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."* This might not have happen except for your faithful gifts! Thank You!

Ministering at Alpha has allowed me to see how set in my ways I can get. Years ago, Debi came into the office when I had been here all by myself and was very established in my way of doing things. I had set my routine for doing all the front desk scheduling and phone work. My reaction to her putting things where they "didn't belong" and changing my way of doing things really upset me! I had created a very comfortable zone for myself and resented the changes. God allowed the conflict to expand my ability to be flexible and be conformed to His ways not mine.

Ministering at Alpha means I may have up to nine appointments a day. Often I hear tragic tales of broken marriages and abusive childhoods. I have been involved in people being sent to prison for crimes against children and adults. I have gone home after a difficult day and thanked Debi for her love, loyalty, and her gift for handling finances! Working at Alpha has made me more appreciative of all He has given me.!

Ministering at Alpha means that I have repeatedly taught people about looking to Christ as their very life source. John 15:5 *I am the vine; you are the braches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.* I cannot repeatedly share 'Christ as Life' for all these years without applying it to my own life. Repetition is still the best teacher.

To be continued next month!

God Bless,

Richard

Alpha Counseling Service

20730 Bond Rd/Suite S-180
Poulsbo WA 98370
360.779.3624

Website: alphapoulsbo.org