

In the hybrid meeting called “Brown Bag,” the host named Drew guided the individuals who were in the zoom meeting and in the in-person meeting in which there was free food and drinks. The meeting code for the zoom meeting was 908708255 and the passcode was 059483 on Mondays at 12:00 pm. The main topic was discussing our character defects, gratitude, and frustrations which interrelated to steps five and six. These steps were admitting our flaws and transgressions to God or a higher power and to others and having God or a higher power to eradicate our character defects.

The life change they were seeking was the betterment of themselves in terms of self-control as well as a belief in God as the higher power who would give them aid when they need it in troubled times in their lives. For an example, one woman had said that she had a good family and a secure home, yet she had felt isolated because no one truly understood what she was going through and how she had struggled with her alcohol addiction. This particular woman had said that she is seeking life change by attending every AA meeting and trying to surround herself with good people and with a nurturing environment. Whenever her friends invite her to a fancy diner, she is hesitant to attend because she knows that they would drink, however she had said that she trusts her self-control now.

Another example was a man who had a lot of anxiety and worries in his life, and thus he had resorted to excessive drinking and eventually had become an addict. However, now that he has been attending the AA meetings and has been believing in Christ, his worries have lessened, and thus his drinking had inevitably lessened as well in a reciprocal fashion. His life change of excessive drinking to a life of tranquility was accomplished to a degree. A third example was a man who had a two-year-old child and a four-year-old child who was frustrated about juggling between his responsibilities as a father, husband, and employee at the company he works at. Just

by hearing his voice, I could tell how exhausted and stressed he was and that he was a very busy man, yet what fascinated me was that he still was able to make time to attend this twelve-step meeting.

What I have discovered was that most people who had shared had anxiety, depression, low self-worth, mental fatigue, and patience issues. Although these are all different dilemmas they had or character defects as one would phrase it, they all had resorted to the same activity which was drinking excessively to relieve their stress. I had initially planned to simply be the observer and listener but not the speaker. However, the more time went on, I felt myself open up and share what my character defects and frustrations were as well as my reasons for gratitude in my life. I had shared that I cared too much about what other people had thought of me and that I was emotionally sensitive. I had explained that this was like a double-edged sword. In some situations, it would actually become my strength such as emphasizing with a suffering stranger, acquaintance, or friend.

Nonetheless, in certain situations which involved arguing, being emotionally sensitive can bring extra unnecessary pain to one's feelings. Me being sensitive emotionally was one of my frustrations as an individual. This was because my people pleasing was and still is directly intertwined with my emotional sensitivity. My character defects were my inclined egocentrism as well as self-reliance rather than being reliant of God. In other words, I was and still am self-centered and still trust in myself more than God, as I still have the general tendency to think that I am in control over my life rather than God being in control of it. Lastly, I had shared how grateful I was to born into a Christian family with good friends.

What was interesting was that many of the participants had been in this meeting not because they felt obligated to attend due to their current or past drinking addiction, but because

they were lonesome. For some of them, the coronavirus had taken what few friends they had away from them. Therefore, what the Christian church could learn from the twelve step meetings would be the utilization of hybrid meetings. Now that the coronavirus has affected everyone on a global scale, it would be useful if hybrid meetings for fellowship were to be established. In other words, church congregates who are in person and those who are faraway can talk, laugh, and cry together as believers in Christ. This can also open many opportunities for churches to offer safe havens for nonbelievers who are seeking for a place to belong and feel loved. While it is good that Christian churches are using hybrid meetings for sermons, it is a good idea if they use such meetings for fellowship as well.

Another concept which the Christian church can do is to simply provide food for individuals, regardless of whether they are believers or not. In my personal opinion, Sundays do not count, because many nonbelievers are wary of those days as they do not have pleasant experiences with sermons or simply do not want to relinquish one of their free days. Thus, as an alternative, Christian Churches should choose at least one week day to supply free food and drinks such as bagels and coffee for all individuals in order to get to know their local communities better and have atheist friends. After all, if a Christian only has Christian friends, it makes it all the harder for him or her to properly and successfully evangelize another person through the Holy Spirit. This can additionally alleviate the negative connotation atheists have with the term “church” as they have the general tendency to believe churches to be politically and financially manipulative.