WHY I'M ALLERGIC TO DEVOTIONALS

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Category: Observations

In my world, business meetings tend to follow a similar pattern; the very first item on the agenda is the devotional.Â There will be a Bible study and a time of prayer and if time allows (and the group is big enough) there may even be a bit of singing. Once the devotional is out of the way, the day's business proper begins.

Please don't misunderstand me; I've nothing against Bible studies or prayer and despite having a voice like a frog with a sore throat, I think that singing is a good thing, too. However, the concept of the devotional at the start of the meeting does bother me.

Let me explain.

The problem is not what we do during the devotional time, it is that we end up drawing an artificial distinction between the spiritual aspect of our work and the everyday business that we have to deal with. All too often, once the devotional is out of the way, the meeting makes no reference to the things that were raised during the time of prayer and meditation. I recall one meeting where we started with an excellent devotional talk on the subject of listening to God; at no point in the ensuing meeting did we actually consider what listening to God might mean for the business of the day.

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Yesterday, I highlighted the way in which Tim Chester looked at a common problem in contemporary mission work through the lens of Scripture, rather than through management theory or strategic planning. I believe that one of the reasons that we find it difficult to follow Tim's example is that our management and business meetings tend to have the devotional-business divide. We've not learned how to meditate on Scripture as part of our approach to work problems.

I'm not exactly sure how we change things, but I would love to see business meetings that had a much more integrated approach to spiritual life and business life.