

Church Bells- Let's pray!

(Valuable advice of MCF senior)



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“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”(Jeremiah 33:3)

It was when I was a second lieutenant. That morning I was preparing to go to work as usual. I heard a deep-toned church bell from somewhere; I normally couldn't hear the sound.

That was Sunday, the Lord's day.

I rented a room near my unit where I could hear the church bell. It sounded especially loud on that day. (Before 1970s, churches notified the service time by ringing the bell.) It was a moment of waking up from my “sleep of the faith” by the loud sound of the bell; I had surely heard the sound every Sunday.

Thanks to my parents whom they accepted the Lord early, I could attend the church without having a big trouble during my early childhood, and keeping Lord's day had been part of my ordinary life, but the big change in my life caused by getting recruited to the army could not help but scattering my ordinary life entirely.

Of those days, our military often had to work even on Sundays. Especially, a newly assigned officer like me could not avoid Sunday's work.

That excuse of having busy work made me justify losing the Lord's day, but that morning, with the sound of bell from the church, the Lord woke my sleeping soul up.

However, amongst the atmosphere of everybody working busy, I lacked courage to tell my commander about my absence on Sunday for the church service.

I had some burden about that in my heart for several months, agonizing myself. Finally, one day OCU (current MCF) contacted me saying they had a meeting on the evening after work.

Normally I did not attend that OCU meeting, but I decided to attend the meeting on that day. I wanted to have consultation of the faith about keeping the Lord's day with seniors of faith.

After finishing my work, I went to the meeting place. There were many seniors of my unit.

After a brief prayer time, individual consultation of faith was arranged.

I confessed my concerns to a senior whom I respected. He listened to my concerns earnestly, then he suggested me to pray together. After earnest prayer was over, he told me OCU would continue to pray over this matter, so he asked me to pray for myself more as well.

First, he sincerely advised me to make the habit of praying earnestly on Sunday even if I could not afford to go to church due to busy work, and to think the church bell was a call to ‘pray’. The bell of church may be a call to come to church, but my senior's advice of ‘call to pray’ gave me a great religious impression.

After that day, even if I could not afford to go to church on Sundays, whenever I heard the bell I got into the habit of praying earnestly, even for a while at the training site or at the construction site.

One Sunday at a corner of the training ground, I was praying eagerly withholding my hands together, but someone struck my shoulder! I hurriedly closed my prayer and looked back; the company commander smiled and asked if I was a Christian. I said to him “Yes. I am” and “Even though today is Sunday, I couldn’t go to church, so I am praying now.” I was able to say something that I would not be able to say honestly.

After then, the company commander gave me permission so that I could attend the service for about an hour on the weekend.

I realized the meaning of prayer from that event. I could safely overcome the crisis of faith in my days as a company grade officer.

Even now, I am living my life of faith, thinking deeply about the advice of the senior of the faith to pray first in any condition, anywhere.