



*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. Philippians 2:3-4 (NIVUK)*

Do we expect to come home from work as healthily as we went in? Or even to come home at all?

It's easy to look back at an event and see how it could have been prevented, but by then it is too late. Health and safety can have a bad reputation, but in the same way that Jesus left the ninety-nine sheep to look for the one lost, we need to leave the ninety-nine safe situations to address the one unsafe. Similarly, when we hear the tales of apparent overreach in the name of health and safety, we need to ask the question, what is this trying to achieve? Because when viewed this way, often the stories that seem ridiculous at first, turn out to be sensible.

28<sup>th</sup> April was International Workers Memorial Day; this is a day to remember those who have lost their lives whilst doing their jobs. For most of us, most of the time, this is not something that we will experience, but for the family and friends of 147 people in 2019, this was not the case.

Following Jesus' command to love our neighbour, we have to see the value of all of those we work with and so we cannot be negligent in then ensuring that they come home at safe from work. As Christians, if we try to see people and the world around us as God does, then having them come home safe after a day at work is a must. For Jesus called us to love our neighbour and we cannot love without trying to keep them safe.

Caring about the health and safety of our colleagues is not just our legal requirement (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) but a key part of how we should approach our work as Christians. This means that our approach to health and safety should not be just about how do I come home safe, but how does everyone else come home safe.

So how do we do this? Does this just mean that we minimise risk for us and those we work with? Do we run into danger so that others might not have to? Do we challenge the structures around us? All of these play a part, and none can be looked at without thinking of the others.

This is not just about ensuring that we do not do our work in a way that endangers others, but is as much about looking at structures of money and power. Are they more concerned about productivity and profit than about the lives of those who work there and about the lives of those who your work may impact? Do they value others above themselves, not looking to their own interests but to the interests of the others?

For many, a large part of what you do in your work is to put yourself in harm's way for the sake of others. Some of those roles are more obvious than others, we will often think of soldiers and fire-fighters and fishermen, but we also need to remember others who may not come home. This year the call to remember those who have died in their work is even more poignant due to the COVID-19 crisis; at the time of writing this more than 100 healthcare workers in the UK have died as a result of caring for those who have had the infection and sadly these will not be the last.

So at this time of remembering, let's give a round of applause for those who put themselves in harm's way, especially those in healthcare and other key workers and take a moment to remember those who won't be coming home tonight.

*For those who put themselves in harm's way, Lord our defender, we pray for your protection*

*For those who are hurt at work, Jesus who heals, we hold them before you.*

*For those who don't come back, Father we commend them into your arms*

*For those who grieve, Spirit bring your comfort*

*Creator of all, we pray that you protect everyone as they go to work today.*