

A Lesson from Joe

My mom, my roommates and I were all dressed up and excited. It was the last day of the Minneapolis LWML Convention, and we were on our way to worship with all of our sisters and brothers in Christ. It promised to be an inspiring closing service.

Sitting outside the convention center was a grubby man who hollered at everyone as they walked by. He wasn't easy to look at by any stretch of the imagination. On the contrary, he was dirty, sitting on the ground, and he smelled like alcohol. But there he sat.

For some strange reason, the Lord compelled me to ask his name. It was Joe. Joe told me he was a Vietnam Vet. It was pretty obvious he was homeless and depressed, maybe even mentally ill. He was crying while he talked. He showed me his battle scars in his hands, on his chest, and in his side, and asked me to pray for him and for his buddies from the war. After I listened for a few minutes, feeling really uncomfortable, I gave him my lunch and briefly held his hand. Then, my insecurity took over. Instead of praying with Joe myself or inviting him to go in to church with me, I decided to go into the convention center and get someone else to come out and pray with Joe. By the time I returned, Joe was gone.

In Hebrews 13:1-3 we are reminded, ***Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don't forget to welcome strangers. By doing that, some people have welcomed angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them. And remember those who are treated badly, as if you yourselves were suffering.*** Joe didn't ask for money, just prayer. He just wanted someone to listen . . . someone to show that they care. All the "Joes" of the world need Jesus just like you and I do. God offers us opportunities to share what the Lord has given us and what our Savior does for us every day. May God strengthen us that we might allow the Holy Spirit to work in us a desire to share our faith with everyone, no matter how different they are or how difficult it is!

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, You have brought us together here to learn, to serve, to make new friends and to bond us as sisters in Christ. We thank You. Send Your Holy Spirit into our midst to strengthen us through Your Word and prepare us for the work You have for us to do, that we might be joyfully united in faith and service. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.