

Let's do coffee

BY Jo

Have you ever noticed that almost every Christian speaker in Sydney 'likes good coffee'? If you look at the blurbs they write about themselves for conferences it seems at least 1 in 2 will mention coffee. (If you hadn't noticed before, now you'll see it everywhere!) In my view this is both good and bad.

I love doing coffee. Yesterday I did coffee three times in the day. That means I sat down with three separate people in a comfortable environment, and spent time with them. I talked about what was going on in my life and heard what was going on in theirs. We prayed. In one case we opened the Bible to talk about some things that God had shown us during the week. Sometimes we meet specifically to study the Bible together. Last night when I went home I was able to pray for my friends with real knowledge about what was important to them at the moment.

Doing coffee doesn't actually mean you have to drink coffee. Sometimes I drink tea. Sometimes we don't get around to having a drink at all. The point is not the beverage, but the company. Sometimes we get take away coffee and go to the park so we can talk while kids play. It's

harder to have a sustained conversation but it's still a chance to hang out with a friend and encourage and be encouraged. Often we go to cafes, sometimes we go to someone's home. Whatever works in our situation and suits our relationship.

As Christians, part of our response to God is to serve him by loving his people. The writer to the Hebrews says, "let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25) Meeting together, encouraging one another, spurring one another on – all of these are things that help to prepare us to live as Christians in this world and to stand firm until Jesus' return. We do these things when we meet on a Sunday, but it doesn't have to end there. We can do it during the week too. Whenever we do it, God is glorified through us.

Saying "I like good coffee" can show a desire to relate to people and spend time with them. So after all this, how

can I say that coffee may be bad? There are two reasons. One is that it's possible for doing coffee to become a gossip session. We need to be wise in our speech and actively seeking to build each other up and glorify God. That doesn't mean that I'm saying we shouldn't talk about our struggles, just that we should be conscious of our motives.

The other reason is that I think some Sydney Christians are in danger of idolising coffee. I'm talking about the bean itself. I know it's a big statement, but I think we need to be careful of not following our culture too closely here. We need to not get too caught up in the world of boutique roasters, the newest home coffee machine, the special premium bean. As an example, this week I'm using a Mexican Yeni at home. When I looked it up on coffeesnobs, one of the reviews is "Absolutely love this bean ... was great to drink from 3 days after roasting. Really nice evolving flavours out to Day 12." I personally am still finding it great 15 days after roasting, though I'm told (by the roaster) it will start to deteriorate soon. I'll still be drinking it long past the time he thinks it should be thrown out (2 weeks from the time he sold it to me). There's nothing wrong with enjoying God's creation, and in my opinion the taste and smell of coffee is one of his great blessings for us. But when we in-



vest too much of our time and money into any one material thing, we need to be aware of how much of a priority it is in our lives. I love good coffee, but I will drink a bad coffee with a good friend and enjoy it. Or I'll drink tea.

So how about you do coffee soon? Maybe with a good friend you haven't caught up with for a while. Or with someone who's new to church or to the neighbourhood. Or with me. I'll have mine black. ☕