



ODF women enjoy fellowship and laughter together after a recent Sunday service.

East Harlem is for Lovers?

February 2010

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud...” I read this Scripture to Ricky, who I was thrilled to be having lunch with at a new pizza shop that opened across the street from where we worship. I thought Ricky had fallen off the face of the earth, a common occurrence in ministry. I probably left him at least five phone messages and then decided to back off and give him space. It’s hard to know when I cross the line from care to nagging. To my surprise, Ricky showed up at our Sunday worship service and afterwards told me that he wanted to check in with me for the new year, so I invited him to lunch the next day.

Ricky had been dating a woman for several years and it did not end well. Since the break-up, he has been struggling with depression and anger. He has been unemployed for over a year and lacks the motivation to take advantage of any opportunities that are presented to him. Ricky summed it up this way: “I feel like I’m stuck in my bed and I lack focus.” Then he told me about the latest person he was dating: “I met her at the Village Halloween Parade. I was dressed as Freddy Krueger and she was dressed as a vampire.” You can’t make this stuff up! He was able to attract a young lady while dressed as a character from a horror movie. I asked myself whether he was that charming or does the young lady need to aim higher? Then Ricky’s description took a more serious turn: “I like her but she’s always looking in the mirror and one time she told me on the phone that she had been bulimic for five years.” We talked about his current and previous relationships and he expressed that the idea that you don’t really know someone when you think you do. “When someone says they love you, you don’t even know what they mean!”

I have been sharing the Gospel with Ricky for some time and I used this opportunity to speak with him about where true love comes from. I shared about the power of the Gospel in shaping my relationship with Melanie for 18 years. Ricky has attended a few of our men’s Bible studies and church services but has expressed skepticism about the authority of the Bible. So far, he has not examined any of the resources I have given him that address his questions but I pray that the Spirit of God will draw him to Christ. I look forward to more conversations with Ricky.

Thank you for your support that makes conversations like these possible.

Johnny and the ODF Family

Prayer & Praise

- Praise God for conversations with people like Ricky and pray for many more.
- Praise God for a great first meeting with the Director of the Dewitt Clinton Senior Center. (More on that later.)
- Pray for Jimmy who recently lost his uncle who was more like a father to him. Pray that he would reconnect with us.



Al and Jose share thoughts on our community’s strengths and challenges.



Johnny and Dominic meet regularly for prayer and encouragement.