

# Food for the Soul

## 9 to 5: God's Downtime

*Fr. Peter Krebs, S.T.*



We have all been taught to compartmentalize our lives. We work from 9 to 5; play a certain number of hours a day; and reserve Sunday mornings for God.

In reflecting on this, it became apparent to me that we traditionally have been led to believe "9 to 5 is God's downtime," that in those hours we must concentrate only on performing daily tasks and planning career related activities.

"After talking to a number of people, I've come to believe integrating God into the workplace is easier than we have been led to believe, if we look at ourselves, God and work as one integrated unit not three separate entities.

Most of us pray daily, and I was particularly taken by one story I was recently told. As one young man enters the office each day, he no longer thinks about the first task before him, the telephone calls he has to make or the correspondence he must read. Rather, he whispers a short prayer to God, asking for help in performing the day's work in the best way he can.

The significant thing about his new prayer habit, he said, is that the simple act of uttering specific words raises his consciousness, and makes him aware of how he must assume greater responsibility in improving his work habits and relationship with others.

He offered this example: One of his subordinates was experiencing difficulty performing a segment of his job, which was causing my friend to lose patience. By the time he reached his office each morning my friend's stomach was in knots, as he anticipated greater inefficiencies and worried about their ultimate effect on the other employees.

While whispering this new prayer to himself one day, he found the answer to his subordinate's problem came not by trying to find a solution for him, but to react differently - perhaps more patiently with less hostility. Miracles did not happen immediately; but gradually with the awareness of God's presence within him, my friend became less controlling, more relaxed and confident a solution would come to him. To his surprise, he found fellow workers responding more positively.

It is not surprise, however, to those who have found a way to place God in the workplace; quietly, unpretentiously and with trust and faith.

