

As You Draw Near to Him, Draw Near to Them

We practiced social distancing long before we needed a tape measure to create distance. The enemies of presence are many. The seemingly magnetic draw of an idle iPhone compels separation from social presence.

It's so difficult to remain present. Our minds rehearse material for meetings later in the day. We check and respond to text messages and simultaneously wish to spend more time with the person seated across from us.

Divorce from table guests has become so prevalent that Daniel Montgomery identified the need and wrote a book, *How to be Present in an Absent World*. In a recent *Greenelines* podcast, he discussed the intimacy canyon that can exist anywhere humans gather.

"We see evidence of absence in the home and at work," Montgomery said. "Over 70% of the workforce is disengaged. Do you ever find yourself wondering why we can't get work done? If you have a disengaged workforce, it means that people are unconsciously sabotaging their own work. And so what does it mean to be who we are, when we are and where we are? I believe that's the central question of this moment."

Though separation is damaging to productivity at work, it is alarming when it occurs in the home. Montgomery said, "There's nothing more disheartening than being in the room with family and feeling lonely. We look around the room, and everyone's connected to their screens."

He further explained, "Our home is a marker of a life of integrity. I want to be the same person whether I'm showing up at church, at home or at work. I want to live an integrated life. I want to be the same guy everywhere," he said. "The

root of the word 'integer' is 'one.' A life of integrity is showing up as one person wherever you go."

One of the most important reasons to be present in all of our relationships and divine appointments is the opportunity to speak into lives and provide godly counsel. Montgomery said, "Think about the people who have influenced your life. They were present for you."

"Research shows that the most impactful leaders are in our neighborhood, or in our home. It's not politicians or bestselling authors. It's Mom; it's Dad. It's a coach. It's a neighbor. It's a youth pastor. Those are the people who change the trajectory of our lives," Montgomery said. "And we believe leadership is everyone's business and everyone's responsibility at the core of being a great leader."

"It's those moments," he said. It's not because they went through some grand curriculum or some leadership training course. It was the men and women who were present to them in a crisis or crucible of their lives."

We must cross the great divide from our high-tech distancing to times of no-tech relating and listening.

For more on this topic, listen to the entire *Greenelines* interview with Daniel Montgomery at this link. {eoa}