

# Don't Let the Air Out

My friend had just told me that God was speaking to him about the need for fasting and prayer. I knew he had been struggling in his Christian life and was encouraged to hear this. But as he talked, something rose up within me and I began to fear for him.

I've seen it often over the years. People make bold declarations and then fall on their face. God was dealing with them about something. It was beginning to take root in their life. They were feeling empowered and excited. Often it had to do with their private worship or prayer experience, or giving, fasting or eating habits. So they told the world – possibly even calling others to follow them.

I've done it myself more than once. Something sacred was taking place, a discipline was beginning to take root and bring new measures of life to me. It felt so deep. So warm. A sweet new intimacy with God was being formed.

But it was still new. It had not yet become a pattern in my life. I was not yet proven. One might say it was gestating within me. Growing, but not yet ready to be delivered and shown to others.

In my excitement, and possibly in my enthusiasm to appear spiritual, I told others about it. And something happened. It was like letting the air out of a balloon. The power was gone. It went flat. Kaput!

I can't explain all of that. I hesitate to apply the "Don't give pearls to swine" concept of Matthew 7:6, because the people I shared with weren't swine. They were good people. But it was a premature delivery and it didn't survive.

My friend nodded with understanding. He saw it happen earlier when he had told others about his commitment to fasting. He had needed to retreat, regroup and start over in this discipline. He was telling me now because I had prayed with him at the altar some time previously and, as He so often does for you and me, God had used that simple prayer to reach deeply into this man's heart. This was not yet a rooted discipline for him and I was one of three persons he had shared it with this second time around. He was going to hold it real close now and let God go deep.

Let's be careful about how quickly we tell others of God's deep dealing. Let it become "life" in us before we tell the world. And especially before we challenge others to follow us!

Yes, as Romans 10:9-10 says, it is important that we tell others of our salvation. It is often helpful to tell someone (especially a trusted friend) when God is dealing with us, and ask for their prayer support. But there is the right time for sharing a specific, growing intimacy with God.

Please understand what I'm trying to say here! Let's be wise. Let's not try to bring something into the world that isn't yet ready for this air! There is a special strength in the secret place and something is lost when we rush it out into the public eye. Often the greatest impact would be made as others see and are encouraged by the new-found strength in our life as we secretly go deep with God.

Born in 1940, Ken Stoltzfus has worked as a pilot, ordained Christian minister, businessman, missionary to Africa and writer. This is #12 in his series "The View from up Life's Path," and is one of many short articles that can be found at [www.John2031.com](http://www.John2031.com).

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