

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”

Psalm 133:1

## Disconnect to Connect

I had the misfortune of misplacing my phone on a microbus. This is by no means an unheard of situation in the chaotic world of Cairo public transportation. After a few days of mourning my pocket-sized computer, the silver linings surpassed the size of the storm cloud quickly.

The obvious challenges did not surprise me. Communicating with friends and colleagues in Egypt, communicating with friends and family in other countries, social media, taking pictures, and checking the weather were all slightly more challenging, an annoyance. I had not realized how dependent I had become on my phone for getting directions, meeting my friends, and finding my socks when the power goes out in my apartment. Each of these obstacles required greater planning, excepting the last one which required more stumbling around in the dark trying to get the curtains open.

Planning required me to set aside time for activities and allowed me to be fully present in those activities. I was able to devote time to creating and fostering friendships with my coworkers, neighbors, and fellow Arabic students. This intentional communication went beyond people in Egypt. While I wasn’t able to talk to my friends and family outside of Egypt as much, I found myself more invested in the conversations I was able to have.

In the eight years since I began using a cell phone, I have never been more “disconnected” from the world around me according to modern technological definitions. However, in those same eight years I have never felt as present and immersed in what I’m doing. Now having a replacement phone, I will have to work to maintain the level of intentionality and focus that I have benefited from during this time. Luckily for me it has a very short battery life.

*Will O’Brien, member of Union Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), St. Louis, Missouri, serves as a Global Mission Intern with the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS). His appointment is supported by Week of Compassion, Our Church’s Wider Mission, Disciples Mission Fund and your special gifts.*



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