

How to Share Tres Dias with Others

Mike Pennington

After experiencing a Tres Dias weekend, we feel so full and so free that we want to share everything about the weekend with others. But then comes the dilemma. What do we say?

Here's how it goes, on occasion: "I just went on a Tres Dias weekend. It was great and you need to go, too." Actually, we realize that wasn't the best wording, but that's how we, in our enthusiasm, sometimes blurt it out. They respond, "Ok, what is it?" We then panic and say, "I can't tell you."

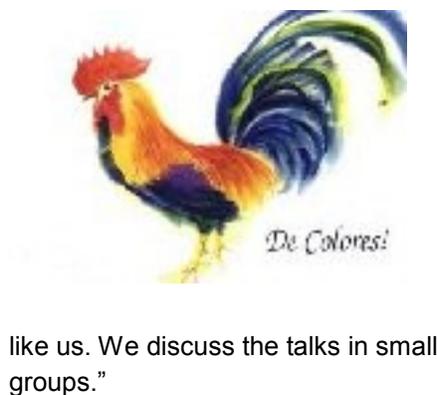
Why do we stumble that way? Perhaps it's because the question reminds us of all the special moments on a weekend that are . . . well . . . indescribable, and we don't want to spoil the surprises. In reality, "I can't tell you" is the worst response we could give; it implies that there are secrets. Remember, there are no secrets in Tres Dias. Consider this, too: Since the other person doesn't know about the surprises, they won't be asking about them! Trust me: You can tell them about virtually everything that went on during a weekend and you won't spoil anything! It is God that shows up on a weekend. He is the one that blesses and transforms, not the surprises.

So how should we tell people about Tres Dias? First of all, don't say they "need" to go. The word "need" indicates some kind of lack on their part. You might say, "I was amazingly blessed. In fact, I have never felt more blessed, and I want God to bless you in the same way He blessed me." Another thought

you could add is, "I want to share God's love with you by sponsoring you to attend a Tres Dias weekend."

If they ask, "What's it all about," here are some ideas to help you know what to say:

"Well, it's three days where we take time for fellowship with other Christians and learn more about Jesus, God's grace, and the Christian life. We sing, eat, pray, and worship. Have I mentioned the food is great? We listen to "talks" on various topics and testimonies by other people just



Sometime in this conversation, the other person will likely say, "Sounds like an ordinary retreat to me. What's the big deal?" You can respond with, "Well, I believe what makes it so special is all the prayer that covers the weekend. It's amazing how many people are praying. Also the whole atmosphere of the weekend is one of love and servanthood, like nothing I've ever seen. People I didn't know loved and served me just because of the love of Jesus."

"I still don't get it," your listener might say. "What's the big deal?" This is when you can respond with, "Well, it's kinda like trying to describe

the taste of watermelon (or chocolate, etc.); you just can't do it. A Tres Dias weekend is something that has to be experienced. You just have to be there. Words alone are not adequate."

Then let it alone. Let God work. It's not your job to push, convince or pester. Let God do His work. He knows the right time for them to attend a Tres Dias weekend. Sometime you could also say, "Now, you know me, right? Do you trust me? Do you believe I'd want to invite you to attend something that would be harmful to you?" They should answer no to that, but again don't push or pester. I didn't go the first time I was invited and you probably didn't either.

One final thought, not about inviting someone to attend, but about how you adapt to fourth day living. Don't get frustrated when what happened on your weekend doesn't happen at church on Sunday. It's not going to happen. Remember, it took three days away from distractions for God to get your attention and work in your life the way He did. It took two or three CHAs (northerners call them "auxiliaries") serving and loving each candidate to create the dynamic of a weekend. Your job is to live a transformed life and transform your environments one person at a time. Also, get in a reunion group and attend *secuelas*. That's where the Tres Dias dynamic is refreshed. Then you are prepared and strengthened for continued service in your world.

Remember "Be Palanca"; be the lever moving people from where they are to where God wants them to be.

How to Tell Your Pastor about Tres Dias

Mike Pennington

With a heart of love, you desire for your pastor to experience the blessing of a Tres Dias weekend. So how do you approach him? Inviting a pastor to attend Tres Dias or explaining it to him is a special process. Since I'm a minister, let me tell you how we respond and what we respond to.

To impress your pastor, be the best church member that he has. Do you want to encourage him to attend a weekend? Then live a transformed life in front of him. Show him that attending Tres Dias makes you more faithful in worship and service than ever before. When he asks for people to show up for or to support something, be the first to volunteer or to arrive. Faithfully give the tithe to your church. Nothing impresses church leaders like faithful giving. Your pastor may be very open to attending when he sees the difference it made in you.

Remember the position he's in. Pastors have to be very careful what they endorse. Some of them have heard rumors about Tres Dias – that it is a secret society or that people who get involved in Tres Dias are less active in church.

The reality is that your pastor may never attend. He is incredibly busy. Some pastors get only two weeks' vacation a year, and he may have good reasons for not using one of those vacation Sundays for Tres Dias. Even if he doesn't attend, he will support your involvement *if* you are faithful to him, to the church, and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Please, never, ever criticize your pastor for not attending or not getting involved in Tres Dias.

Concerning faithfulness to the church, never let Tres Dias become a substitute for your church. Even though your church may not have the atmosphere or be as exciting as a weekend, the church is where the hurting people are, and it's where God has called you to serve. Yes, I know something special happens on a weekend that we wish could happen at church, but that's not reality. It's also true that Tres Dias can become addicting – some have let it become so – and have greatly damaged the reputation of Tres Dias in the process. Is that what Tres Dias teaches? No. We teach that Tres Dias prepares you for greater service in your church. Remember the talks: The Church, Sacred Moments, Christian Community in Action, etc. Remember as well, that Jesus died for the church, not for Tres Dias. If you let Tres Dias become your church, then you have just confirmed that the rumor some hear is true. Please don't do it.

I encourage you serve on Tres Dias weekends, but be balanced. Serving on one or two a year seems about right to me. That way you have plenty of time to both serve in your church and minister to people through Tres Dias. This is my personal opinion and encouragement, spoken by someone that loves both the church and Tres Dias.

Another vital word: I encourage you to never use your tithe money to pay team fees or to make palanca. In my opinion, you are in disobedience to the Lord and His word if you do that. You see, everything I've said in this article is based on what I've heard pastors say. Yes, I've had pastors say, "I dread Tres Dias weekends coming up because I know the church giving

will go down and so many of my members are going to disappear for those weekends." I personally know pastors that will have nothing to do with Tres Dias because Tres Dias participants from their church have hurt them with words, actions, and negative attitudes. That should never happen, even if you disagree with him.

Pescadores and pescadoras ("fishers of men," regardless of our gender), let's make the opposite true! Let's love, worship, serve, and give like never before. Let's honor and encourage our pastors. Remember, they're human, too. It may be your encouragement that carries them through and enables them to win the battles that they face. Make it your goal to always be an encouragement to your pastor.

Finally, if your pastor has questions, I'd love to talk to him. I also have written two articles that describe my involvement in Tres Dias. One is "Why I Serve in Tres Dias" and the other is an "Open Letter" to anyone, but especially pastors and church leaders, who may have questions about Tres Dias. In it I explain in some detail what Tres Dias is all about. Just email me and request the articles at bba.dom@comcast.net

Mike Pennington currently serves as director of missions for the Bledsoe Baptist Association in Gallatin, TN. Previously, he served as a missionary in Venezuela for twelve years with the International Mission Board, SBC.