BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

The Immorality of Price Gouging

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?

2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Snyder, J. (2009, April). What's the Matter with Price Gouging? *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 19(2), 275–293.

Questions

1. Why does Jeremy Snyder believe that the wrongness of price gouging is not about an unfair price increase? How is his example of the New Year's Eve party at the ski resort supposed to illustrate this?

2. Recall our discussion of Uber's surge pricing during winter storms. Would Snyder consider this is an instance of price gouging?

3. Snyder claims that price gouging "violate[s] the norm of equal respect for persons" (p. 280). What is his argument for this? How does his justification rest on the idea that, in times of emergency, an unregulated market is unable to equally respect traders?

4. Recall that Matt Zwolinkski thought price gouging was morally permissible because (1) neglecting disaster victims is morally permissible and (2) price gouging is not worse than neglect. How does Snyder respond to this argument?