

Daily Devotional, June 17, 2020 Don't Get Too Close—I Need You!

***“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)***

Has this time spent physically apart from most of your friends and family brought you to realize just how much we need each other? I'm guessing that at times in the past, we have brought ourselves to think it's just easier to get things done in solitude due to some experiences we have had in trying to team-up with others that did not end up very well. But if we were to reflect on those times for a moment, it does not take long to realize that we cannot get very far if we attempt to venture out and do life mostly on our own. Dwell on this for a minute: how long are the odds for us if we take the “me against the world” mental approach? I would say the odds are stacked against us to the tune of about 7 billion or more to one. I don't think those odds would be much in anyone's favor, would you agree?

Well, this pandemic has made it very clear to me that, not only *do* we need each other, but just *how much* we need each other, even if it means keeping some distance from one another for a while. Even that time together is important. The reason for social distance is not because we *don't* need each other, but because we *do*, and we *will* in the future. For instance, we need people in the medical profession to be able to treat us if we get really sick. We need people who make medical supplies to continue to make more, so the supply can keep up with the demand. We need truck drivers to move those supplies along with food to our various grocery stores so we can eat. But, nevertheless, we also need people to be willing to self-quarantine so they do not put others in harm's way.

If we were totally honest, we are all threatened to a greater or lesser degree in this pandemic, and we need each other to ultimately win over this threat by working together for the common good. This pandemic, strangely enough, has taught us just how much we need each other—to be both together and apart. And in that knowledge, we are all confronted with our need for God to give us more love for and appreciation of each other.

In God's Word we read: ***“It is not good for man to be alone.” Genesis 2:18 (NKJV)*** A good question to ask then is this: why is it not good to be alone? I believe it is because we are hopelessly social people. God made us this way. God made us to be in need of God and each other. God made us to live in desire of both family and community. This is a large part of what it means to be made “in God's image”. That is why having to live with social distancing, even for a short while, does not often feel right. As human beings, we want the real connection that social distance deprives us of.

To that end, though this temporary time of social distance does not feel right, it can help us get in touch with some of our deeper, God-given longings. The good news is that once this season of life has passed, many of us will come to appreciate, in a new way, just how much we really do need each other. I have to believe that we will no longer take each other for granted. We will value each other more. So, with this in mind, let us start to value each other more highly, just as God does even now. Let's expend the extra effort needed to stay in touch. Let's ask God to grow our love for all people and learn to love each other with God's love. For at the end of the day, we really do need each other. Let's live like we do!

Prayer: God of heaven and earth, in these times of isolation, apart from loved ones and distant from friends, thank you that there is nothing in all of creation, not even coronavirus, that can separate us from your love. And may your love that never fails continue to be shared through the kindness of neighbors looking out for one another. Keep us all in your care. Amen.