

Bible Studies

Loneliness

What is loneliness?

What causes loneliness?

How do you feel when you are lonely?

There are many ways you could define loneliness. Not having people about, or being on your own, are not enough. It also includes the feeling that people do not really care about you. Or that you are not valued.

Loneliness is endemic to our society. Sociologists point out that in modern industrial societies, (like ours) are very good at what they call "Secondary relationships". A secondary relationship is the kind of relationship you have with your hairdresser, (doctor, co-worker, neighbour). You chat, you exchange pleasantries, you even talk as if you care about one another, but the truth is you are getting your hair cut. There is no intimacy or real compassion, it is a pretend intimacy.

Our society is very bad at producing primary relationships. A primary relationship is where there is an enduring friendship. Family is the primary source of these relationships. (Communication is deep and extensive) In a primary relationship the interest is in the whole person, (in a secondary relationship it is only part of the person eg. their skills as a hair dresser / need for a hair cut).



Loneliness comes because of a lack of Primary relationships.

When we are alone we tend to become depressed, lethargic and lack motivation, we tend to see and expect the worst. We give in to hopelessness and boredom. Humans are social beings. If we are exposed to long periods of isolation, (eg explorers/astronauts) we tend to go a little mad. Even God said of man. *It is not good for him to be alone.* Gen 2:18



Loneliness comes as a result of our lifestyle. To change it we must change our lifestyle.

Did anyone in the Bible ever feel lonely?

The answer is a resounding yes. For many reasons, good and bad, many of the Bible character went through periods of loneliness. David, running from King Saul, hiding alone in the desert. He wrote these words

My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare. Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Psalms 25:15-16

He also wrote *Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me. Psalms 27:10*
Jeremiah said; *I sat alone because your hand was on me. Jer 15:17*

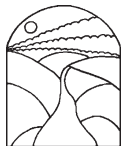
I think Jesus must have been desperately lonely at times even though there was always a crowd around him. No one understood, no one shared his burdens, no body was on his wavelength. In the end even his disciples left him alone.



When we are alone all our fears and doubts seem to get magnified.

What does Hebrews 13v5 say?

If this is true, are we ever alone?



**Waiuku AG
Ray Moxham**

www.wag.org.nz

WaiukuAG
@Maxnet.co.nz



Someone coined the phrase “lonely but never alone”.

The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9

God is the loneliness breaker. But of course, God doesn't count. It's human friends we want. Yes I accept that but God only 'doesn't count' if we discount Him. The truth is that a relationship with him is all we need.

Jacob was a real rat bag, he cheated his brother and then his father and ended up running from his home for fear of his life. For the first time he was alone.

What happened next? Genesis 28v10-16

Jacob met God. If you are lonely the first solution is to start developing a relationship with God. Do this through constant prayer. Talk to God, read His word. You will find that God is especially close to the lonely. You have the opportunity to establish a relationship with God that will see you through the rest of your life. It is money in the bank.

Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. John 16:32

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. John 14:18

When you are lonely you think that you are the only one. The truth is that everyone goes through loneliness at some time in their life.

When you are lonely you think it will always be the same. The truth is it will pass.

Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning. Psalm 30:5

It is very important when we try to combat loneliness, that we see things as they really are and not according to how we feel. We may feel no one cares but is it true? We may feel we will always be alone but what proof do we have?

The fear of loneliness is often worse than the reality. The fear of loneliness can cause us to stay in relationships that are bad for us. Loneliness itself can make us do things that are stupid, badly thought out or plain wrong before God.

Can you think of any examples?

God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; Psalm 68:6

The word translated families is not the usual word for families. It is the word we get, 'Kibbutz' from. It means 'group', it is a good word to describe a church.

Churches are very good at providing Primary relationships. However this does not happen automatically.

Can I expect others to do something about my loneliness?

No, most people will not even give it a thought. Loneliness is a private affair. You are the one who must make the initiative.

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly. Prov 18:24 KJV

If you want to have friends you have to be friendly. You have to take the risk and start making friends.

Will every friendship you try to make work out?

Do you need someone with you all the time?

What can you do to create friendships?

Friendships can't be forced they have to develop with time.

Seldom set foot in your neighbour's house— too much of you, and he will hate you. Prov 25:17

What does this verse mean and how does it apply to friendship?

What can you do to prevent loneliness?

What kind of lifestyle change is needed to combat loneliness?

What do you think the Church needs to do to combat loneliness?