

From the Family Room

**Creekwood Church of Christ
Mobile, AL**

4 February, 2018

Fellowship and Loneliness



Loneliness - sadness because one has no friends or company
Fellowship - friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests

Now the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" Genesis 2:18

But if we really are living in the same light in which He eternally exists, then we have true fellowship with each other I John 1:7

Day after day they met in the temple continuing with one mind, and breaking bread in various private homes. They were eating their meals together with joy and generous hearts Acts 2:46

Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Lift up a song for Him who rides through the desert—His name is the LORD—be in good spirits before Him. A father of the fatherless and a judge and protector of the widows, is God in His holy habitation. God makes a home for the lonely Psalms 68:4-6

We live in a time of great contradictions. We are connected to each other in so many ways by technology, but at the same time loneliness is a sad reality for more and more people. The result of studies indicates that the number of lonely people has increased significantly over the last few years. The estimated number of lonely people in the United States is 20% of the total population, or 60 million people. The average American has only two friends with which to discuss important matters. Almost 25% of Americans have no such close friend to serve as a sounding board. Loneliness has many harmful effects on our physical health and has been shown to decrease our life span.

Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad of Brigham Young University recently completed a study regarding how the social relationships a person has positively affects their life span. One result was finding the top two indicators of a long life. The first indicator was how much interaction we have with people as we go through the day. This includes friends and strangers. How many people, often strangers or clerks, do we talk to in the store or at a restaurant? A close second indicator in importance was our intimate, devoted relationships. These are people we can call on to take us to the doctor if needed or who will sit with us in times of trouble when we are at our rock bottom. These are people that we freely open up to.

All of this was foreseen by God. God created us social beings. After creation, God looked at what had been made and found it to be "very good." (Genesis 1:31) But we read the first thing God said was not good was man being alone. (Genesis 2:18) God created us with a need to be loved by others and to belong. To successfully develop from children to independent adults, we must learn who we are individually. Then we must learn where we fit in and how to get along with others. We fulfill our need for fellowship when we develop successful relationships with our family first and then with friends and other associates.

God also created the church where we should have real fellowship with others who have a common faith in God, a common love for God, and a common love for each other. I pray that we will love each other to the point that we eliminate loneliness as much as possible at Creekwood. Be watchful for those in our spiritual family who may be lonely. Send cards of encouragement. Give hugs readily. Love.

RICKY