

The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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LONELINESS

I have done a great deal of thinking lately about those who are alone, or feel alone, over the holidays in particular. Some are alone because they have no family nearby or they have lost their family. Some are alone in their thoughts. While I have always had my family nearby, I have spent time feeling alone in my thoughts.

You may be asking yourself why I am writing about such a foreboding issue coming into the "holiday season." This is not a cry for help but a thought that I feel needs to be shared and understood. It is those who are alone in a crowded room of family and friends that has been on my mind. Many years ago this was me. Once when I was in high school and once as a single adult I spent too much time in my own mind contemplating being alone. I have friends that have either attempted or committed suicide. I have counseled some who have considered and/or attempted suicide. What I want to share with you all today are my thoughts on what we can do to help those around us who are in that fragile state of mind. The

things I will write about are universal in nature as you may never know about their state of mind.

Loneliness, in my opinion and experience, is a major factor facing those in this state of mind. They feel that no one cares about them and that no one would even notice if they were gone. We are a group who is genuinely interested in the people around us as we want others to know that they are not alone. This means actively listening to others and taking an interest in what is going on in your life. Jesus cared for people and the church here in Concord is a hospital for those who are lonely where healing can take place.

Pain, again in my opinion and experience, is another major issue. The pain can come in both physical and emotional ways. Most times you may notice someone who is in physical pain but may not necessarily notice those in emotional pain. Again, knowing the people in your life goes very far in noticing who is in pain and who needs help. We want to be a shoulder to cry on, a sounding board for those who are frustrated. This church is a place for pain to be relieved and the prescription is love.

Desperation is my final issue. Many are desperate for whatever it is that is troubling them to end. Too often we do not see beyond ourselves and our own troubles to seek help as we tend to think no one understands us. We may feel that we are the only ones that have ever gone through whatever it is we are going through. One of the ways in which we get to really know others is to share something of ourselves with them. If we keep the troubles God has seen us through to ourselves we will never help each other. You have gone through what you have gone through so that you can help others through their times of hurt and pain (2 Cor 1:3-11). The church is full of people who have gone through a wide range of problems and issues. There is probably someone here who understands.

As Christians we are here to meet those around us where they are and share God's love. Someone loved me enough to share it with me and I want to share it with you. Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 4:5-12, "There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I

toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless—a miserable business! Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Jay Repecko (Because the original article was for a specific locality, some editing was necessary.)

Marriage Partners are Facilitators

To be quite honest, we've never thought of marriage partners as "facilitators" until now. We got the idea from Don Ferguson. He writes, "Your partner should facilitate a great life, not hinder it. If your partner is seen as standing in the way of something good, then change the type of relationship you have rather than leaping overboard." Dr. Ferguson is the founder and owner of Infinite Relations, a counseling center in Verona, Wisconsin. He apparently specializes in helping married couples work through conflict. He reminded us of just how important it is to work in tandem as a team in order to facilitate the growth of each other and of the relationship.

The phrase "facilitate a great life" got our attention. To facilitate is to "make easy" or "assist the progress of." A facili-

tator is a person who does that. It sounds like a buzz word from the nineties, but it actually came into our language in the early seventeenth century from a French word that means, "to render easy." We can make life easier for each other if we so choose, or we can choose to make the relationship virtually unworkable.

"Facilitator" sounds pretty much like "helper," a word that describes the marriage relationship in Genesis 2:18. The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." It is often assumed that this text imposes a position of rank in the marriage relationship. The husband is the journeyman; the wife is the apprentice. It becomes the rationale for deciding that a husband occupies a controlling role and the wife occupies a subordinate role because she is designated as a "helper."

A concordance study of the word "helper" will quickly place that conclusion in doubt. It doesn't matter whether you do it with your English concordance or a Hebrew lexicon. It comes out the same. In the Old Testament, at least twenty times, the Hebrew word translated "helper" in Genesis 2:28 refers to God. No one thinks the word "helper," when used to describe the actions of God, renders him subordinate to those he assists. Your concordance study will also reveal that it rarely has anything to do with rank, even when it's talking about the relationship between humans. It simply refers to one who renders aid.

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That's what a facilitator does. We have the capacity to help each other in the marriage relationship. Helping is not on the shoulders of the wife alone. We have the capacity to achieve much more in life if we work together toward mutual goals. This has nothing to do with the "headship" debate. That's a different matter altogether. The point is that we both have to be helpers if we want the marriage to work. If we pursue separate agendas while living under the same roof, our relationship will never reach its full potential. If we work at cross-purposes to each other, the results can be disasters. We think Don Ferguson is onto something. We need to be facilitators.

One other thing about Adam and Eve. Don't you think Adam also had a helping role?

By Norman and Ann Bales,
All About Families,
8/10/2010

