

Feeling Alone in a Community of Believers

Have you ever felt alone at a gathering of a large group of people? There can be times in life when we feel alone even though we're among familiar ones. We all probably have felt shy and alone approaching others within a large group, all of whom appear to be visiting with someone else already.

Many Reasons to Feel Alone

Feelings of being alone are also familiar to believers from time to time. Feeling alone might be more common for a believer in a large congregation, where it may be more difficult to make and maintain friendships if one is shy or reserved. In some areas, we might be part of a large congregation but do not live in close proximity to others who are familiar to us. Some people have lots of believing family and relatives, and their social activities revolve around family events such as birthdays, anniversary parties, etc. The person without close relatives can feel left out, more alone.

In moving to a new congregation, an individual or family may not have extended family or relatives nearby. Without family and close friends, it becomes easier to feel alone. Holidays can accentuate feelings of loneliness. Because others have well-established circles of friends, it may seem hard to join these circles. Such experiences, too, heighten the sense of feeling alone.

There are other life changes that can bring on feelings of loneliness. Friends move. Friends may get married while we remain single. People change jobs and/or work hours and aren't available for shared activities. Friends may begin having children and are busy with their young families. Others have large families. Some have few, one, or no children. These differences may change opportunities or frequency of fellowship.

We Need Travel Escorts

It is important that we adapt socially with these life changes. We all need friends and journey companions. We need to be cared for in our walk of faith. We need others to preach the gospel to preserve faith and a clean conscience and to strengthen our faith. God's Word instructs: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Feelings of loneliness, if they persist, can cause us to doubt our faith. Is this not the work of the enemy of souls? Doesn't he want us to feel despair? Doesn't he want us to give up our faith? He might prompt further doubt: "Nobody cares about me. I might as well quit believing this way because none of these people will be my friend," or perhaps, "Nobody else can understand my lonely feelings."

Serve God's Kingdom

All believers are worthy of escorts and friends and need to seek the company of other believers. It is written in Ecclesiastes 4:9,10: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." We are blessed to be traveling in the flock of believers in the Heavenly Father's care. It is good to reach out to others to find friendship and social activity in God's kingdom. We can also pray for friends and escorts.

One way to develop friendships is to volunteer in congregational activities and willingly serve God's kingdom. You don't feel alone when you join in to help others or join in the mutual work of the congregation. Freely share your gifts. When we work with others, we develop camaraderie and friendship. A good example of this is serving together at camps.

We often leave with warm feelings and with new friends from among the camp participants or others serving there.

By attending services, participating in camps and other organized activities, we feel the love of the believers, and we feel that we belong. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16). Singing songs of Zion with other believers can also help us feel warmth and belonging.

Reach Out to Others

God’s Word teaches us to love and serve one another. “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). For example, we should try to include those who are new to our congregations, either having recently moved or are just visiting. If we notice that people are alone, we should not walk by but greet them—welcome them if they are a visitor. It’s also nice to reach out to those living without family nearby during holidays and other times when they might especially need inclusion. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). Most importantly, we are instructed to care for one another. “And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 John 4:21).

We are all traveling together to reach our heavenly home. Jesus has promised to be with us: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20). Let us freely preach the gospel to one another to strengthen our faith and bonds of Christian love. Paul instructs, “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2,3). Let us be a support to one another so no one would have to feel alone on this journey and all would reach heaven.

Carol and Gary Tiffany

Discussion Questions:

1. There are many situations where people might feel alone in their place of watching. How can we help?
2. In this age of technology with electronic communication, what are the benefits of face-to-face human contact?
3. How can we expand our circle of friends to include others needing friends or feeling alone? How can we teach our children to include others?

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