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## Daily Devotional - Wednesday, September 11, 2024 - The Joy of Companionship

SEPTEMBER 11TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

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In May 2023 the U.S. Surgeon General released a report detailing the effects of loneliness on the American population, claiming that “lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.” In addition, loneliness resulted in a “29% increased risk of heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke.” Isn’t it strange that in a world more connected than ever through technology, the scourge of loneliness still strikes a lethal blow?

The Teacher tackles social isolation in today’s passage. In verses 7–8 he states that he has observed a pattern in the world that seemed futile to him. This man was completely alone, “with neither son nor brother,” and yet he worked tirelessly. Surely this

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9**

should not be, for God created humans in the Garden of Eden to be in relationship with others. In fact, the only not good thing God observed in His six days of Creation was isolation: “It is not good,” the Lord said, “for the man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18).

God’s solution to this “not good” aspect of creation is to “make a helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:18). The Teacher’s solution is the same (minus the creation part!). In 4:9–12 he details the benefits of companionship: a higher return on your work, help when you fall, warmth during cold nights, and protection from attackers. Perhaps the Teacher didn’t have in mind the dangers of stroke and heart disease, but he knew that humans need one another because that is exactly how God designed us. And developing meaningful relationships with others is one way the church can

present a compelling witness to the world around us. We are called to be in community with our fellow believers. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

Go Deeper

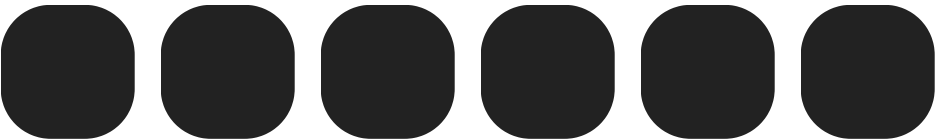
Have you experienced connection in your local church family? How can you nurture a relationship with another believer today?

**Pray with Us:** Jesus, thank You for the gift of fellowship. We are not alone—You saved us into a family of believers. In Your steadfast love and gentleness, teach us how to love one another as You have loved us.

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