

**Weekly Devotions**  
**South Holburn Church**  
**7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

## **READINGS**

I have noticed something else in life that is useless. Here is someone who lives alone. He has no son, no brother, yet he is always working, never satisfied with the wealth he has. For whom is he working so hard and denying himself any pleasure? This is useless, too—and a miserable way to live.

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him.

*Ecclesiastes 4:7-10*

Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise. Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

*Hebrews 10:23-25*

“When you are in the final days of your life, what will you want? Will you hug that college degree in the walnut frame? Will you ask to be carried to the garage so you can sit in your car? Will you find comfort in rereading your financial statement? Of course not. What will matter then will be people. If relationships will matter most then, shouldn't they matter most now?”

*Max Lucado*



## REFLECTION

One of the phrases used frequently as we move through the Covid 19 pandemic is “a new normal”. By that phrase people mean that life will not be the same after Covid 19 as it was before. The idea of ‘a new normal’ is then a very challenging, even scary idea, making us ask what do we want to change in life and what do we want to remain the same? That is a very personal question and answers will vary from person to person, but there are certain ideas which will be common amongst many people. And one of those ideas is relationship. Time and time again through the lockdown people have indicated that what they have missed most are not things, or even places, but people. The changes in lockdown restrictions have majored on allowing people to meet together as soon as possible because there is a recognition that we need as connection with others.

As Christians none of that should surprise us. The Bible makes it clear that God is defined by relationship – God is trinity, three in one in perfect unity. The whole of the Bible is the story of God in relationship with humankind. Jesus shared his ministry and his life with others and calls his followers to do the same. The early church had no buildings in which to meet, instead they welcomed one another into their homes, and it was in fellowship that the gospel grew and spread.

Perhaps the greatest challenge and opportunity that lies before us is to learn to be the church in this ‘new normal’. And, somehow or other, our relationships will lie at the heart of that response. For, while much will change in the this ‘new normal’, God’s love of us will not waver and God’s desire to forgive sins and heal brokenness will not run dry.

Think then on the people you know. The people who matter most to you – family and friends. But think to on the people you meet around you – neighbours, casual acquaintances, work colleagues, the folk you meet regularly in shops or wherever you take your recreation. How can you show to them the love of God? How can your actions and your words portray the passion and the care of God for each of them?

## PRAYER

God who is three in one,  
Father, Son and Spirit,  
God, ever reaching out to us,  
Never giving up on us,  
God who calls us family,  
And longs to welcome each with a loving parent's embrace.

God, we thank you for your friendship  
For the welcome we know we receive when we call you name.  
Whether we come to praise or to lament,  
To rejoice or to cry out  
You never turn away, you are never too busy.

Now we bring before you all whom we have met today,  
And all who we love, all who we know.  
Deepen our relationships with others,

May we be a blessing to them and they to us.  
And we pray for those around us in our lives,  
Asking that they too will know the welcome you offer,  
And the love that you share.

In Jesus name we offer our prayers,  
Amen

