

Lonely for Others

Bible Study • Study Guide

Opening Prayer: It is awful to be lonely, Lord. Sometimes when I am in a crowded room, I still feel lonely. The world is full of lonely people sitting on park benches, in movie theaters, and even in family or work gatherings. Help me reach out and be more responsive to others. Grant me the strength to take the risk. The hurt cannot be worse than the loneliness. Help me, Lord. Amen.
[Paraphrase of a prayer in *The Lutheran Prayer Book*, Vance E. Lichty, (St. Paul, Minnesota, Apostolic Publishing Company, 1994), 40–41.]

What is loneliness? _____

Definitions of “loneliness” include “cut off from others, sadness, bleakness, and desolation.”

What is the opposite of lonely? _____

What is a relationship? “Relationship” can be defined in three ways for our discussion purposes:

1. A connection, association, or involvement;
2. Connection between persons by blood or marriage;
3. An emotional or other connection between people.

Using these three definitions, what do you think of your relationship status? _____

Have you felt isolated or cut off from others recently? _____

In the AARP article, “Is There a Medical Cure for Loneliness?” (Lynn Darling, AARP online article, December 11, 2019), the author states: “Loneliness and isolation increases the risk of heart disease, infection, depression, cognitive decline, and early death. Blood cells of lonely people appear to be in a state of high alert responding as they would to a bacterial infection.” The feeling of rejection, disconnection, and longing, some researchers believe, causes a pain as real as any caused by physical injury. Being lonely is not healthy.

Who are the people in our lives? _____

To which people in your life are you closest? Why? _____

Are there any people you would like to get to know better? Why? _____

Describe the qualities of the following biblical friendship:

1 Samuel 18:1–4 (David and Jonathan). Their souls were _____. (verse 1)

Jonathan made a _____ with David. (verse 3)

Jonathan gave his _____, _____, _____, _____ and his _____ to David.

What is the main hindrance to this relationship? _____

In these passages, it seems the friendship between Jonathan and David is a bit one sided. Jonathan gives, and David takes. Maybe you have felt that way about some of your relationships. In fact, since Jonathan was in a position of prominence, he had more to give. Later, however, after Jonathan's death, David vowed to take care of Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth, for the rest of his life (2 Samuel 9). All relationships should be reciprocal in nature.

Even with a great friendship like this, David suffered from loneliness. Read Psalm 102:7.

What is the purpose of friendship in these passages?

Genesis 2:18 _____

Proverbs 11:14 _____

Proverbs 13:20 _____

Proverbs 17:17 _____

Proverbs 18:24 _____

Proverbs 27:5–6 _____

John 15:13 _____

Assignment: Draw a relationship tree with you as the trunk. Think of ways to strengthen the relationship with those you already know in the close by branches. Think of ways to branch out.

What are some ways to make new friends? _____

Once you have established a relationship with someone, what does Scripture say in the following passages about treating your loved ones?

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 _____

Romans 12:9–13 _____

Being alone is not the same as being lonely. Jesus often cherished those times alone to meditate and pray. Read Matthew 14:23.

Be encouraged with Proverbs 22:11. We have a King as our friend at all times.

Suggested song: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (LSB 770).

Closing Prayer: Lord, even if I am surrounded by people, I can be lonely. I need a connection to You and to others. I long to receive the life-giving energy of shared experiences, knowledge, passions, values, and common goals. You know I need relationships. Thank You, Lord, for the relationship I have with You. Please deepen my relationships with others. Amen.

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