

## **WHEN LONELINESS PREVAILS**

Loneliness is the feeling we experience when we hunger for human companionship but are bereft of it. It is important, however, to differentiate between loneliness that arises from circumstances beyond our control (when we are shut in by sickness or disability, for example) and loneliness that comes from an inability to relate well to others.

When we are lonely because of life's circumstances we must never forget that nothing can interfere with our communion with heaven. Shut off from others we can still have contact with the Friend of friends. An elderly Christian man who lived in a home for senior citizens said: "I spend all of my time in this home, but I *live* in God."

Many people, though, are lonely not by reason of their circumstances but because of an inability to relate. In a needy world like ours, it has been said, anyone can have friendship who will give friendship. A very lonely individual became someone who was sought after by many after he heard his pastor say in a sermon: "The best way to have a friend is to be a friend." He went home, got down on his knees and prayed: "Lord, forgive me for focusing more on myself than others. From now on I will move towards others with the same love by which You move towards me." As his thoughts changed from self-centredness to other-centredness he became a more interesting and attractive personality. His circle of friends widened, and he became outgoing in all his relationships.

No Christian is ever without the friendship of God, but when lacking the friendship of human beings, keep in mind that when we give ourselves to others, they will often give themselves to us.

*Father, whatever the reason for my loneliness, help me take these words to heart. Drive the truth deeply into my spirit that I can never be bereft of Your presence, and, to have a friend I need to be a friend. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **SCRIPTURES ON WHICH TO REFLECT**

1. **No orphans in God's family.**

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14: 18)

2. **Take a step closer to God.**

Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4: 8)

3. **Those who ask – get.**

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. (Isaiah 58: 9)

4. **God never separates or divorces His people.**

I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. (Hosea 2: 19)

5. **Spend time with God and He will spend time with you.**

The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. (Psalm 25: 14)

6. **Concentrate on being a friend.**

Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality. (Rom 12: 13)

7. **Put others ahead of yourself.**

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. (Romans 12: 9 - 10)

8. **Love – the greatest virtue.**

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3: 14)