

RECONNECTING DURING TIMES OF DISCONNECTION
By Jim Langley

This year's global pandemic has taken a toll in many ways. One that is sometimes overlooked or underestimated is becoming disconnected from important personal relationships, due to shutdowns and the need for social distancing. Some of us are more sociable than others, but even introverted individuals need regular contact with other people, who help to keep our lives more balanced.

As a result, pandemic restrictions have presented us with a new problem: How to reconnect during times of disconnection. Thankfully, technology has provided some solutions. We can now connect in ways that were not available in decades past, such as Skype, FaceTime, and most recently, Zoom.

In recent weeks I have participated in a number of Zoom meetings; they have alleviated some of my stress associated with the loss of valued contacts. My initial Zoom experience was business-related, but since then this technological resource has enabled me to maintain connections with friends and groups that are vital for my spiritual well-being.

During these virtual meetings, I have often been reminded of the admonition in Hebrews 10:24-25: *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Often this passage is applied to church attendance, but any time we can connect with like-minded believers, we can be encouraged and "spurred on."

We all need encouragement in these challenging times. Meeting electronically certainly cannot replace in-person, face-to-face encounters, but it definitely surpasses only hearing a voice over a phone. News reports about the coronavirus have concentrated on the numbers of people suffering from the virus and the death toll associated with it. Comparatively little has been said and written about the impact of being alone for extended periods of time.

Isolation can cause great mental distress, and being restricted in a small area with little social interaction can be extremely stressful. We all desire the freedom to roam a bit, to leave the confines of our homes. We need diversions, especially ones that take our focus off of our problems, as well as the relentless coverage of the seemingly unending pandemic. Too many television programs can take a toll on our mental well-being as social beings caught up in a social distancing dilemma.

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This is why virtual meetings, even with just another person, can be so beneficial. Proverbs 27:17 says, *“As iron sharpens another, so one man sharpens another.”* We need not just friendly fellowship, but also the creative friction that comes from people interacting as they pursue a common mission.

During times like these, however, we must never forget how much we need connection with our most important relationship: with God. Being able to connect with other human beings is wonderful, whether it occurs via technology or in person. But I have found nothing can compare to the time I can spend with the Lord and the Word of God.

For those who wonder, *“Where can I turn for answers I need to continue living an abundant life that’s meaningful and valued?”* I would strongly recommend the Scriptures to find the answers you seek. If you have become disconnected with God, I cannot think of a better time than now to reconnect. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus Christ calls out, *“Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* He is waiting for each of us to simply come and connect with Him today!

© 2020 Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing “Fourth Quarter Strategies” in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. In terms of relationships, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you? Have you found that your stress level, or even feelings of anxiety or fear, have increased in part due to the inability to interact as usual with friends and coworkers?
2. Have you been able to take advantage of communications technology, such as Zoom, FaceTime or Skype, to reach out to people you would like to stay in contact with? If so, what have been the positives – and negatives – of using those resources, especially compared to physical, face-to-face interactions?
3. How has the impact of the pandemic affected your relationship with God? Have you sensed an increased need to connect with Him, or have the distractions related to enforced social restrictions actually inhibited your relationship with God? Explain your answer.
4. What benefit have you received – if any – from reading the Bible on a regular basis? What are some obstacles that can make it difficult to read and study the Scriptures on a consistent basis?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says about this topic, consider the following passages: Psalms 1:1-6, 4:1-8, 31:1-4, 19-20, 119:9-16; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Acts 2:42

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