

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

April 2, 2020



New York City, from the “Top of the Rock” (Rockefeller Center)

“No one cared for my soul...”

When you look at a city like New York, it’s hard to imagine anyone being lonely. From what I hear, it is the most densely populated city in the United States. Yet, as you look at these buildings, even before the Coronavirus hit us, there were probably thousands of people living in those buildings who were all alone. With the present crisis, I worry about how the stay at home orders are affecting elderly people who are living in assisted living facilities, nursing homes and apartments. These people are all by themselves and can’t even get together with their fellow tenants or, in some cases, family. How are they spending their time? I can’t imagine how lonely they must be.

All of us have been lonely at times but the kind of loneliness makes a difference. There is isolation of *space*. This is when you are physically alone; no one else is around. Sometimes, this isn’t such a bad thing. But isolation of *spirit* is different. You can be lonely even in the presence of other people (or with many contacts online). This kind of loneliness is created by the “cold shoulder” or indifference. The psalmist describes it this way: *“Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul.”* (Psalm 142:4). “No one cares for my soul.” Those are sad words.

Generation Z (born between 1995-2012) is, reportedly, the loneliest generation ever. That’s due to the incessant use of screens that are a poor, and apparently, dangerous substitute for personal interaction. That’s a sad fact in itself but it also may be a major factor in the rising suicide rate in that age group. In 2017, the suicide rate among 15- to 24-year-olds climbed to its highest point since 2000. According to a research paper published in [the medical journal JAMA](#), the increase was especially high among 15- to 19-year-olds and young men. One cause of that is bullying and much of that takes place online these days.

It’s difficult to know what to do about that, but we should be aware of it and help our kids and grandkids to interact personally as much as possible. One of the most difficult aspects of the stay-at-home order for grandparents is not seeing their grandkids as often. That’s a kind of loneliness, too.

Whatever the cause, there is really only one solution to the “isolation of spirit” problem and that is prayer. When Elijah was depressed after his victory on Mount Carmel, his feeling of loneliness was overwhelming (see I Kings 19). What did he do? He prayed (I Kings 19:4, 10, 24). When Job was suffering physical distress, sickness and mockery, what did he do? He prayed (Job 13:3-4, 15-16; 23:3; 31:35; 42:1-16). When Jesus was in the garden, facing a horrible death, what did he do? He prayed (Luke 22). If prayer was the remedy for those great men of faith, why not us? Let’s pray for ourselves and each other, but also:

...check in with each other during this crisis and make sure that if there is isolation, it is only of space, not of spirit.

Hymns usually help — “Be With Me, Lord” — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKC-dzOVtPM> or

“Nearer My God, to Thee” — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwL1snY5WPI>