



To The *Lonely...*

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By Major Jason Swain

Loneliness in our time has almost become an epidemic itself. We are more connected than any other time in history, and yet we can be incredibly lonely. On a crowded street or in a busy restaurant, you can observe small groups of people who are engaged with their cellphones more than with the people around them, even if the people with them are close friends.

I have been a single Salvation Army officer (pastor) for over 20 years. I have faced the darkness of loneliness, and occasionally still battle with it. However, I retain a small body of close friends, and also feel that I am never truly alone as the Holy Spirit ministers and speaks to me on a daily basis. “And surely I am always with you, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20, NIV).

Here are three takeaways to help you combat loneliness if you are sheltering at home:

1. Stay Connected to Family & Friends

Quarantined does not mean socially disconnected. While I would limit social media, I would also use its feature to stay connected to family and friends who are also at home. My mom and I have daily FaceTime calls, just to check up on each other. I also belong to several chat groups that keep me connected with my hobby groups.

2. Go Outside and Exercise

There is something about fresh air and being outside, even if it's just in your backyard, rooftop, or a balcony. When you are inside

all day and night, you can start to feel hemmed in, and anxious. Go for a walk, enjoy your morning coffee on the porch, have that conference call on the deck with the trees in the background. Eat lunch outside somewhere.

3. Consider Adopting a Pet or Starting a New Hobby

This one depends on your present circumstances. However, having a pet is one way of combatting loneliness. Having a dog for example, forces you out of the house a few times a day, just for bathroom walks. Cats like to lay in your lap, or on your desk, usually right in front of your laptop screen. For many single people, pets are an essential part of their lives. Secondly, this may be the time to start a new project or learn a new skill. There are dozens of videos on any subject you can imagine.

Dear reader, we are truly never alone, though we may feel loneliness at times. However, we serve a God of love, peace, and joy! As Nehemiah writes:

“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you” Nehemiah 9:6 (NIV).

Keep your spirits up, keep safely home,
and remember this too will pass.

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