

Devotional

## INCREASE OF LONELINESS

The AARP found that 40% of adults age 45 and older are lonely. This is consistent with past studies in 2010 and 2018, those reports found 35% are lonely. Their recent research showed men are slightly more lonely than women. 46% from ages 45-59 share they are lonely compared to 35% over age 60 and older. Almost 60% of those 45 and older shared how tech - computers and phones, help them to have a social network. But, some reported using tech caused fewer "real" friendships.

Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor; if either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." v 12, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

Our God's presence is there for you and me always. Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Sometimes we try and try, work and work, because of loneliness thinking in building systems or structures for the future we won't be lonely. Our direction should be to the Lord rather than the hurry, hurry, rush, rush, thinking our plans will find the answers and peace we seek. Isaiah 40:31 is our Christian goal, "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength". The fellowship with the Lord and with other Christians, good friends, and serving the Lord and others makes the difference.

Churches with open doors and hearts are making a difference in the relief of loneliness. Thanks be to God. You and the churches of Northwest Ohio Association and making a difference! Certainly there are all kinds of groups, programs, and activities in our communities too to get involved with. By serving others we can often break free from loneliness. Churches are beacons of light and welcoming.

We learn to be aware not to overdo it when we see prospective members. Mary is a wonderful Christian in another denomination. When she and her family moved to a new town, they started visiting churches. She shared how welcoming some churches were. But some were too aggressive. "Welcome Mary", "could you start teaching Sunday School this month?" "Could your husband be a trustee?" and more.... on their first visit to one church. Sometimes our church needs, overwhelm our common sense.

Our loving Shepherd will never leave us nor forsake us. Our Shepherd heals the broken hearted and is there for us along with the Christian fellowship all can enjoy. Plus, we have the joy to introduce others to meet the Shepherd.

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