

### 13. Social Support: The Tie that Binds (2Q 2010—Health and Healing)

**Biblical material:** Gen. 1:27, John 1:1–3; 13:34, 35; Rom. 14:7, 1 Cor. 12:14–26, 1 Cor. 13, Gal. 6:2, Eph. 4:1–16.

#### Quotes

- The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love. *Hubert H. Humphrey*
- Take a day to heal from the lies you’ve told yourself and the ones that have been told to you. *Maya Angelou*
- When I stand before thee at the day’s end, thou shalt see my scars and know that I had my wounds and also my healing. *Rabindranath Tagore*
- The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world. *Marianne Williamson*
- Eventually you will come to understand that love heals everything, and love is all there is. *Gary Zukav*
- Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. *Mahatma Gandhi*
- We are all broken and wounded in this world. Some choose to grow strong at the broken places. *Harold J. Duarte-Bernhardt*

#### Questions

What is important about the social aspect of health and healing? What kind of people were we created to be? What happens when we are forced to be alone? How does our desire for social interaction relate to our ideas about God? What is God looking for from us? How can we best develop healthy relationships?

#### Bible discussion

The Bible makes clear we are created to be social, loving people (Gen. 1:27, John 1:1–3; 13:34, 35). No one lives just for themselves (Rom. 14:7). Just as the body is made up of many parts, so we all fit into a larger body (1 Cor. 12:14–26). This is based on the fellowship of love that binds us together (1 Cor. 13). We share in bearing each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2), and we are made to come into unity with each other (Eph. 4:1–16).

#### Comment

“It is not good for man to be alone.” We are created as social beings—we need each other’s company, and we need a relationship with our heavenly Father. We look for friends, and we should also see God as our closest Friend. As the memory text makes clear, we are to love one another—and it’s for our own good! “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34, 35, NIV).

One time a publication ran a competition for the best definition of a friend. The entries included: “One who multiplies joys, divides grief”; “One who understands our silence”; “A volume of sympathy bound in cloth”; and “A watch which beats true for all time and never runs down.” But the entry which won the prize said, “A friend—the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out.”

Jesus told his disciples--up until now I have called you servants. But now I call you friends. Why? Because they knew him, and participated in his plans and hopes. Because they in their very human and fallible way, loved him. Shakespeare says that "Journeys end in lovers meeting."

Friendship is not based on the observation of rules and requirements. Love cannot be required, only pleaded for. And God knows us very well—our very thoughts (Psalm 139:2)—and so shares with us in the only way that will work!

Said Jesus, "If I be lifted up...I will draw *all* to me." (John 12:32). The drawing power of God is his character that wants to love all of his unlovable, rebellious children. He offers friendship, and saving, healing love. And what do we say? What do we do? Crucify him again! (Hebrews 6:6). For we say we want a lasting relationship, but do we? Are we really serious? So often God is disregarded, even by those who profess to be his friends!

Think about it! How do you form a lasting relationship with anyone? Can you call someone friend without spending time together, doing things together, sharing life together? It's the same with God. You can't call God friend if you don't take time out together. He's not interested in a long-distance relationship—he wants to be involved with you, be close beside you, the one you call first! So to have a lasting relationship with God, *you* have to put time into it.

One of my aunts once mentioned to me that she'd "lost her faith"—speaking in the same way as if she'd left her handbag on the bus. Suddenly she'd woke up one morning and realized that she didn't have a relationship with God any more. But in reality such a change doesn't come overnight. It comes from years of neglect, of taking God for granted, of forgetting to have Him involved in your day-to-day life. We need to take time for God.

### **Ellen White Comments**

Let Christians not make it possible for the enemy to point to them and say, Behold how these people, standing under the banner of Christ, hate one another. Christians are all members of one family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same blessed hope of immortality. Very close and tender should be the tie that binds them together. {AA 550}

Our ministers make it a point, as far as possible, to meet the people at the close of the evening service. They take their hands in a friendly grasp, expressing pleasure at meeting them, and the hope that they will come again. Thus is woven a thread in the tie that binds heart to heart. The social hand-clasp brings a warmth to the heart, and a sense of relationship. "All ye are brethren." {RH, May 22, 1900}

The minister of Christ who is imbued with the Spirit and love of his Master, will so labor that the character of God and of his dear Son may be made manifest in the fullest and clearest manner. He will strive to have his hearers become intelligent in their conceptions of the character of God, that his glory may be acknowledged on the earth. A man is no sooner converted than in his heart is born a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. {GW92 45}

But he whose eyes have been opened to see the love of Christ, will behold the character of God as full of love and compassion. God will not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son... All despair is swept from the soul when Christ is seen in His true character. {ISM 371}

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