

CORONAVIRUS - TOGETHERNESS

The coronavirus outbreak, the lockdown and the restrictions that have been put on society have created a number of opposites – opposing emotions and sentiments. There have been feelings of loss and opposite feelings of gains; there have been feelings of separation and its opposite, **TOGETHERNESS**.

When I was younger I remember two sayings that also always seemed to be the opposite of each other, and which appeared to contradict each other. The familiar sayings were, “out of sight, out of mind” and “absence makes the heart grow fonder”. As I have grown in my experience of life, each of these sayings has proved to be true for different circumstances – something has quickly gone from my mind when it has not really mattered, whereas for something or someone who really matters, separation has only emphasised the **TOGETHERNESS**.

As strange as this may seem – that separation should intensify feelings of togetherness – it should not come as that much of a surprise. In the Creation picture story the LORD God saw that all He had created was very good, but “*Then the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner*”. In other words, we were made to be in relationships and not alone, we were made to be together and not apart. But how come then that even though we are actually apart, physically separated, that there is still this **TOGETHERNESS**?

I do not know about you, but I have spoken to near neighbours more in the last few weeks than I have ever done in the last few years. Whether that be before or after the clap for the NHS, or simply spending more time in our respective gardens. I have also spoken to or caught up with old friends and acquaintances who I have not been in contact with for years – my family have never heard from me so regularly! We have been “together” more, even though we are not physically together there is **TOGETHERNESS**.

In fact, if there has been one event, one occasion in which this sense of being more together while being apart, of being more united in the midst of our separation, then it was the VE Day 75th Anniversary. The words of the song “We’ll meet again” reminded us of our current separation but we sung them together. Everyone had to socially-distance but celebratory street parties were held nonetheless. We may be apart at the moment, but the LORD God has made us to be together, and nothing – not even a virus – will destroy our **TOGETHERNESS**.