We Need Each Other   **Pastor Michael Kooy**

Of all the effects of COVID-19 restrictions, I find the isolation the hardest. In the isolation, we can have difficulty thinking or remembering things. We can get stuck in obsessive thoughts. Even the most introverted need someone around sometimes.

Where do you need someone?
Our childhood experience shows us that we need to hear someone's voice when we are afraid and in the dark. Recovery groups show us that we need someone to help us resist temptation.   Military leaders show us how much we need to work together to win a battle.   Those who achieve success show us how much we need someone to help us achieve great things. Weddings and anniversaries, baptisms and birthdays show us that we need someone to help celebrate key transitions in life. We need someone when we feel low and need encouragement. We need someone when we are sick, someone to look after us a bit. We need someone when we come to die and look for a gentle hand to hold.   In these times and more we need someone. And someone needs us!
Though we are restricted, there are people we can call, people who live here with you, people ready to serve. Plus, you may be that kind of person for someone else.

Being there for someone
Use the following self-guided meditation to reflect on being Christ's hands and feet for someone in their need.
Take a few moments to let your inner thoughts settle. Be still.
Reflect on these passages (they are written out, below):

Luke 11:25-37	Who is a Neighbor?
Romans 12:10	Love and Honor
Philippians 2:4	Consider the Interests of Others

As you begin, ask God to speak to you through the Scripture.

Read Luke 11:25-37. The legal expert asked: who is my neighbor. Jesus turned the question around and asked: who is a neighbor to the one in need? The one who had mercy. Go and do likewise, Jesus said. Spend a minute remembering someone who has shown mercy to you and give thanks to God. Quietly reflect on how you might show thanks or care for someone in these days?
Meditate on Romans 12:10 and Philippians 2:4. These passages point to ways we can mirror the love of Christ to others. Reflect on a way you might express love to someone this week. As you think over those in your life, pray for a person God brings to mind.
Read the passages once more, resting in God's love shown us in Christ Jesus.

Luke 11:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Romans 12:10 (ESV)

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

Philippians 2:4 (NLT)

Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.