

5 Minutes for Faith – “Missing Others”

Do you miss anyone terribly right now? Perhaps it's someone you've lost ... a loved one who has passed. Maybe there is a dear friend with whom you've been unable to get together for too long. Or it could simply be a relationship that went sour.

For me, personally, missing my children has been weighing on me in recent weeks. Our two daughters moved to Chicago just after Easter. One son has joined them there for the summer, and the other is living in New Jersey. As a very close family, this division has been difficult. I certainly understand how my mother in Korea feels, knowing I moved to America nearly 30 years ago to pursue the ministry here. That decision was the hardest in my life, and the oceans of separation continue to be a struggle for me.

It is entirely normal to feel sad, anxious, or even a bit depressed when you miss someone in your life. What gets us through such challenges and pain? The easy answer is to try to replace the void with a new friend, an activity to keep you busy, or anything take our minds off of the hurt. For those separated by distance, regular check-ins and the use of communication technology can help replace the emptiness.

But your church family also can deliver a great assist in overcoming the hollow feeling. Most of us have a yearning for community and corporate fellowship, and other Christian believers offer a possible solution by standing in the gap for us. In personal terms, our faith can get us through. We can turn to God in quiet moments and find solace, patience and comfort. At times, we may even feel as though we've come next to that person we're missing when we find the sweet spot of contemplation and reflection.

The Bible provides us with many examples of family and friend separation. The familiar story of Job details the upending of his family unit and the trials and loneliness he felt. Joseph was abandoned by his brothers and sold into slavery before finding his way back to his father and a homecoming with his family. Ruth and Naomi leaned on each other for support, highlighted by Ruth 1:16 where she pledges unwavering loyalty by declaring: *"Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God."* Even Jesus experienced great anguish in separation from loved ones, acknowledging the loss of a friend, Lazarus, before he raised him again, and the emotion directed toward his mother when he was dying on the cross.

"In this world, you will have trouble," reads John 16:33 ... but the rest of that scripture includes *"But take heart; I have overcome the world."* When we're missing someone, we can indeed find solace in the Lord. And among our earthly friends who provide us support, comfort and love. Don't be afraid to use these resources – God and your friends – to help get you through.

If you miss someone dear to you, consider that our church has many opportunities for group fellowship and service. We have a summer hike program, our "lunch bunch," our July 19 ice cream social after church, an August 8 Akron Rubber Ducks game with church friends, and so much more. Don't "miss" these fun activities!

With blessings, Rev. Hyun-Suk Kim ("PK"), Wadsworth United Methodist Church Lead Pastor

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