



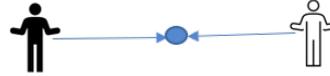
Growing through times of change

Week 5 - Seeking connection



St Paul's
LUTHERAN CHURCH BOX HILL

We are designed for relationship – for connection with others.



From the moment I am born my strongest instinctive drive is toward others. My entire system is dependent upon connectedness and relationship to help ensure that I grow in body, heart, mind and soul. This remains throughout the course of life.

We can only be truly ourselves when we know who we are in relationship.

Never has the role of human relationship and connectedness had greater exposure or focus. As a result of Covid we have had to endure circumstances that have compromised our basic requirements of relational wellbeing.

What this has this time cost you in your connectedness to others? Have your body, mind, heart and soul has struggled with their aloneness? Have you felt the discomfort, suffered the loss and found a way to keep going? Are you weary and worn down and feeling like there is no one there for you? Or has this felt like a time of reprieve? A welcome relief from the social demands, expectations or anxiety that plague your 'normal' life.

For many, this is a time of vulnerability. Of uncertainty and apprehension about re-entering the world. Many are experiencing the tension between longing for relationship and connectedness and the desire to stay within the safety and self-protection of this place of retreat and withdrawal. Can we allow our vulnerability to lead us at this time? To help us choose what it is that we really want and want to be, in relationship.

- *There's a deep desire in each of us to belong.* To have a place where we feel secure, where we value and are valued by the others in the group.
- *There's a deep desire in each of us to be understood, seen and known* for who we truly are. To have a place where our authentic self is truly accepted, valued and discovered.
- *There's a deep desire in each of us to be given a space where we can enter,* with whatever it is we choose to bring and there we will be heard and held without condition.

Each of these require vulnerability. Require a willingness to enter into that space and come as we are and trust the other to hold that space for us and accept us for who we are. And also to be the unconditional other. The one who invests in creating a place for others to belong, to be accepted, to be held.

It is an investment. This is a place that is often difficult and costs but as with every worthwhile investment, *the possible rewards are immense:* The joy, fulfillment and comfort of real connection with others. In order to increase the likelihood of connection:

- *I need to want to connect.* It needs to be important enough to me that I will make space for my own apprehension, weariness and competing priorities, and make the effort to enter into that shared space.
- *I need to be aware of my own needs and capacity to give – and to receive.* To be open with myself and others about how much I can honestly invest at this time.
- *I need to be myself and allow others to be themselves.* I need to be able to make space for those things that cause me uneasiness in relationship: the opinions, choices, idiosyncrasies and discomfort of others. I too can have opinions, make choices, share my quirks and feel my own pain without neither of us having to fix, change or judge.
- *I need to be curious and value the other.* When there is genuine interest and enthusiasm between people, a wonderful energy, a synergy is created that changes them both for the better.

The challenge of genuine invested relationship is not for everyone. For some the effort is too much, the cost is too high, the hurt is too deep or the rejection too real. To maintain genuine connectedness and find meaningful relationship with others requires intention, action, trust and perseverance in order to reap its rewards.

If ever you question whether relationships and connectedness are worth the investment and the cost, reflect on the areas of your life that bring the greatest blessing. Let that guide your answer - for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.