



## Let Us Run the Race Set Before Us . . . While Caring for Those Nearest Us.

### Serving Leaders in Life

This article was written by Great Commandment Network. To view more from GCN visit [greatcommandment.net](http://greatcommandment.net).



*"So that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another"*  
(1 Corinthians 12:25).

**Pastor:** To lead most effectively during these turbulent times, it will be important to prioritize moments for your own **RELATIONAL HEALTH**. Here's a short devotional to encourage you not to let social distancing become relational disconnection!

Hebrews 12:1 reminds us: "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." This pandemic has been set before us. It's something we didn't choose, and it's something we really don't understand, but we are in a race that we can run together. Let's be proactive to enrich our relationships even as we social distance. Let us run this race with endurance, all the while showing care for those closest to us.

Here are some practical tips for enriching relationships and showing care in your marriage and friendships.

#### **In Marriage:**

During a crisis, the healthiest marriages will be enriched in all three dimensions of the marital relationship—spiritual, emotional, and physical.

For spiritual closeness:

- Read through a devotional together, pray, or worship together as a couple. Take advantage of all the online worship resources.
- Consider talking through these sentence starters during a quiet conversation:

*Here's what would strengthen my faith during these crazy times . . .*



I feel close to you spiritually when . . .  
I would enjoy it if we could . . .

For emotional closeness:

- Plan an activity that is just for you and your partner. Make plans to play a board game together or go for a walk. Discuss options so that both partners have something to look forward to. Anticipating a positive time together helps protect your heart and mind from the grip of anxiety or fear.
- During your time alone, complete these sentences:  
*I am even more in love with you as we go through this challenging time because . . .*  
*I am grateful for you and for our relationship during this crisis because . . .*

For physical closeness:

- Increase your expression of caring and affectionate words.  
*I'm just calling/texting to check on you and remind you I love you.*  
*It's been too long since I reminded you how much I love you ... so I just did!*  
*I'm looking forward to being together when you get home.*

You'll draw closer together as a couple, and you'll be amazed how this increases the possibilities for more intimacy!

Make specific plans to nurture one of these dimensions of your marriage.

### **In Friendships:**

During this crisis, the healthiest friendships don't let social distancing become social isolation. In every conversation, be sure to include moments of appropriate vulnerability and genuine communication. Make your conversations meaningful and fun! Here are some ideas:

- *Here's what has strengthened my faith during these challenging days . . .*
- *With all that's happening, I often find myself feeling . . .*
- *As we face this virus, I sense that the Lord wants me to . . .*
- *It would mean a lot to me if we could . . .*

Make plans to increase your experience of care by sharing these moments:

- Look for ways to serve your friends—how could you meet their need for support? How could you offer to help?
- Share words of affirmation with your friends in creative ways. Draw a giant apple with messages of gratitude and deliver to a teacher. Schedule coffee delivery for your friend and then send a text message that thanks them for being in your life.
- Which of your friends might need encouragement? Who's feeling weary or overwhelmed? Encourage your friend with a text or phone call—maybe send a handwritten note or a meaningful Bible verse.

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