



Hope-Filled Living

Serving Leaders in Life

This article was written by Dr. David Ferguson with Intimacy Therapy Network.

Research in social epidemiology suggests that the absence of positive social relationships is a significant risk factor for broad-based morbidity and mortality.

Evidence indicated that loneliness heightens sensitivity to social threats and motivated the renewal of social connections, but it can also impair executive functions, sleep, and mental and physical well-being.¹

¹House, J., Landis, K., & Umberson, D. (1988) Social relationships and health. *Science*, 241(4865), 540-545. Doi:10.1126/science.3399889

Pastors: Each of us experience the ups and downs of hope. Some days, we're hope-filled about the future, and other days, hope seems lost.

For instance, you may have:

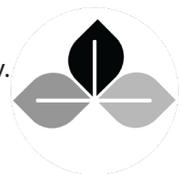
- hoped the virus wouldn't find its way to our country, but it did.
- hoped the virus wouldn't affect our schools, sporting events, or social gatherings, but it has.
- hoped the virus wouldn't disrupt our worship gatherings, but that is indeed the case.
- hoped the virus wouldn't affect anyone you knew, but even this has become true for many.

Relationships are one of the keys to hope: Don't be alone!

Losing hope is often a symptom of being alone. Think about it—when you are feeling down, what helps you feel better faster than a close family member or friend entering your world and comforting you? When you are struggling to achieve a goal isn't it amazing how your perspective changes when a friend comes alongside to encourage you or maybe appreciate the progress you have made?

Comfort, encouragement, and appreciation are three of your "**God-ordained**" relational needs that, met through caring relationships, remove aloneness and foster hope!

Looking further into to these three relational needs, we would notice these descriptions:



Need	Definition	Opposite	Looks Like/Sounds Like
	Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; to hurt with and for another's grief or pain.	Pain Minimized	Putting an arm around you when you're sad. Sitting quietly and just "being there." Comfort might include crying with you. "I'm sad for you. I'm so sorry that you are going through this." "I know you are really disappointed. I know it really hurts when..."
	Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward caring for others well.	Discouragement	A phone call to encourage you on your "big day." A note expressing belief in you, that you can do it. Giving a note or sending a text that says, "You can do it." "I know you can do it. Don't give up, keep at it. I believe in you!"
	Expressing thanks, praise or commendation. Recognizing accomplishment or effort particularly for what someone does.	Criticism	Certificates, notes, rewards for effort as well as accomplishment; public and private recognition and thanks. Someone recognizes your accomplishment or effort. Appreciation is often given through medals, certificates or trophies. "You did a great job!"

You might find watching a short video helpful for further internalizing what each of these three needs "looks and sounds" like. (*click the icons above*).



A spirit-empowered disciple loves people through living a Spirit-led life of doing good in all of life: relationships and vocation, community and calling.

"...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

Pause & Reflect:

Now it's your turn to reach out with hope as you text or message a family member or friend, sharing a simple message like:

- *"I'm sorry for all the hassle you're going through without a job and the added stress at home." (comfort)*
- *"You'll get on top of that class you're struggling as your diligence kicks into gear. I'm cheering for you!" (encouragement)*
- *"With all you've got going on, I'm grateful for you reaching out to so many of your friends just to check in on them. Well done!" (appreciation)*

"I have just messaged (who) _____ with this message of _____ by simply saying _____."

Undoubtedly, your friend or family member will be a little less alone, possibly a little more hopeful, AND you also will find additional **hope** as you put your focus for a few minutes on caring and connecting with others!

