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RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

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A couple of weeks ago when I wrote about the 102 year-old Mr. Johnny McKinney, I was talking to my brother about it and he reminded me that his grandfather was 103. I certainly had forgotten! I asked how he was doing. My brother said, "I actually haven't talked to him in a while. Let me call him on 3-way." In just a moment we were in conversation with 103 year-old Greenville County native Mr. Eddie Williams. One thing he said pierced my heart. "Ain't nobody been coming to see me!" My brother said, "Well, Papa, there's a pandemic right now, a virus, you know, that's why." Papa said, "A virus? Viruses been around forever. They been around since I was a little boy. I don't care about a virus." My brother said, "This virus is a little different than other viruses, and out of respect for you and your age, that's probably why no one has been to see you. But we can talk on the phone."

Yes, we are in a pandemic. Yes, the virus is highly contagious. Yes, we should practice social distancing. Yes, we should wear a face mask to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Yes, we should do what we can safely do to maintain relationships.

A friend loves at all times.

~Proverbs 17:17

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

~John 13:34

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

~Hebrews 10:24-25

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

~Ephesians 4:2-3

This week, I need to go to a school to drop off a package for a teacher. I could have left it in the front office to be placed in her box. Instead, I decided to take it to her classroom. I had on my face mask, as did everyone else in the building. I wouldn't touch anything I didn't have to touch, so I thought it should be okay. The teacher and I chatted for a few minutes, we both smiled behind our face masks as we caught up from the closure. After dropping off the package, I

decided to drop by and speak to all of the Science teachers, nothing formal, just hello. One teacher, a new hire, I had only previously met her on Zoom, and we have Zoomed multiple times together. She couldn't believe her eyes when I walked into her classroom. I'm sure if we weren't in a pandemic, we would have embraced one another.

Relationships are important. We cannot let our current situation stop us from communicating and showing love to one another. Rather than "social distance," maybe we should "physical distance" to prevent the spread. Social distance is a barrier to relationships, and man was made to be in relationship with one another. In Genesis, the Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God. The God we serve is a triune God - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit - who exist in perfect relationship with one another.

Who needs to know your love? Who do you need to contact? Who did you say you were going to reach out to? Who haven't you seen since Christmas? Who should you text? Who should you call? Who should you visit?

Psalms 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Our days were numbered prior to the pandemic, and the pandemic hasn't changed the number of days we each have, but for me, it has served as a reminder that everyday is precious. Everyday is an opportunity to show love. Everyday we create memories. Everyday, we live out our obituary. Through the pandemic, I am realizing that everyday could be my last day. I live a busy life, but it's important to maintain and grow the relationships I have with people. Some people I visit face to face, others I call or text, I communicate through social media, emails, by sending cards through the mail. Sometimes a gentle word from a friend can encourage the discouraged and motivate the depressed. Reach out to someone today, you will not regret it. Amen.

Thank you for reading!

Have a blessed week!

Kim