

Vicar's Blog

April 2018

Combatting Loneliness

Mother Teresa once said that loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty. Loneliness is a poverty that can easily be invisible, not recognised by neighbours, colleagues or fellow church members. It is known that should loneliness become chronic, it is disabling and can have a significant adverse impact on physical and psychological health.

It seems somewhat ironic that loneliness can be so prevalent when we are surrounded by ease of access to others through modern communications. Smart phones enable any-time access to friends and family with telephone conversation, text messages, sharing of photographs and face-time conversations with friends or family on the other side of the world. Loneliness is managed and countered by connection with others, community, good-neighbourliness and sensitive friendship.

Each of us was born through relationship and we grow and are shaped through relations in family, work or community. God created us to connect with each other. Simple relationship fostered by caring awareness can make the difference between the despair of isolation and the enrichment of life, which comes with interaction.

At Holy Trinity Church Hall we have a monthly coffee morning which is a time for meeting others, and enjoying conversation. On Thursday afternoon we have Tea and Chat. During school term time on Wednesday and Thursday mornings our Inbetweenies gatherings are opportunities for parents of preschool children to meet. I am also aware that church members are alert to and try to reach out in support of neighbours and friends who are alone.

The Village Hall holds tea parties and lunches. Other local churches offer events that give people the opportunity to meet and find refreshment. Yet I know that our Councillor, Kathy Williams, is aware of the increasing number of older people living alone and possibly feeling isolated and trapped.

Many people tell me that Longlevens is a lovely place to live, and I understand why they say that. We can each play a part in helping to ensure it is not a lonely or isolated place to live. If you have not seen a neighbour for some time, knock on the door to say hello. That small initiative may be a step towards making a bigger difference than you could ever imagine.

'Seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.' Matthew 7.7

Gwyneth