



When Alone

April 27, 2019

Texts: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 7:25-34; Matthew 19:8; Genesis 37:34; Isaiah 54:5

The following is an excerpt taken from Wired's "The Stunning Loneliness of Megacities at Night," written by Michael Hardy. [1]

The United Kingdom recently appointed its first minister of loneliness in response to a study finding that over 9 million UK residents often feel lonely. "For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life," Prime Minister Theresa May said.

One of those 9 million people is photographer Aristotle Roufanis. "Even though I had many friends and family there, I felt very isolated," Roufanis recalls. When he brought up the subject with his London friends, he discovered that many of them felt the same way but were reluctant to acknowledge it. "No one admits they're lonely. It's easier to admit you have a disease than that you feel isolated."

Roufanis, also a civil engineer, believes that the way large cities like London are designed is partly responsible for why people feel so lonely in them. "Cities are built for efficiency and not necessarily for social interaction," he says. "The bigger the city, the lonelier we feel. It's a paradox."

*Roufanis tackled the problem of urban loneliness head-on with a photography project. His series *Alone Together* comprises thousands of photographs that Roufanis took of cities at night, then digitally stitched together into immersive, large-scale panoramas. The images are nearly all-black except for the dozens of lighted windows scattered throughout the urban landscapes, evidence of tenuous human activity amid the darkened office blocks and apartment towers. Roufanis sees the lighted windows as signs of hope. By opening up about his loneliness to friends and family, Roufanis finally*

realized how common the condition was. "By talking about it, I felt better. So that's what I'm trying to do with this project," he says. "I'm trying to convey an optimistic message hidden in a sad reality."

In what may very well be a first for an Adventist Sabbath School lesson, this week we look at the topic of loneliness. God created humans for fellowship. We are social creatures by God's design. When we are denied that basic human need for companionship, the feelings of loneliness can expand to include a sense of alienation and rejection. A simple feeling of loneliness can progress to create deep emotional pain.

There are several situations that can produce the conditions that develop these feelings of loneliness. Some choose to live singly, but others prefer to be married and raise a family. When that does not happen, for whatever reason, a person can tend to focus on that sense of isolation. When relationships fall apart, people can struggle to learn how to live alone again. The ultimate loneliness occurs when the death of a loved one hits home. God promises the Holy Spirit as our divine comforter during our times of loss and grief. We, however, as God's church have the privilege in these situations to show our faith in action. Helping others deal with loneliness satisfies our own need for companionship.

~cb

Photo by [Huy Phan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[1] <https://www.wired.com/story/lonely-cities-night-photo-gallery/>

For Reflection

Connecting: What is one of your favorite social activities that no one else in your class may know about? Write it on a slip of paper and put it into a hat. Each one take out a slip and see if you can guess who wrote the activity on your paper. Then discuss: How well do you really know each other?

Sharing: Why do you think that God's people, who profess to believe Jesus' command to love one another, tend to form cliques?

1. It's easier to hang out with people who are like-minded so we're not pulled out of our comfort zones
2. No one plans to ostracize others, it just happens unconsciously
3. We can only really connect with just a handful of people—it's too stressful to try and be friends with a large group
4. Some personality types socialize better than others
5. Our cliques protect us from having to deal with unpleasant people
6. Other:

Applying: How well does your church do fellowship? Can you think of ways in which you can improve the social lives of your church family? Brainstorm new opportunities to socialize together and plan when, where, and how to make these happen.

Valuing: Honestly evaluate your social condition: are you lonely, but in denial about it? If so, what can you do to reach out to others? If you aren't lonely yourself, pray for God to show you how to help someone else who may be feeling ignored.

Welcome to Sharing Scripture

We hope you have been enjoying Sharing Scripture as an interactive weekly resource for your Adult Sabbath School study guides. Not only does this resource start with a story in the news and link it with the Bible texts and topic of the Adult Sabbath School study guide, but it provides questions for reflection. The four questions follow this cycle of learning:

Connecting: a question or two that moves you from personal experience into the Bible

Sharing: digging deeper into Scripture and understanding what it means

Applying: experimenting in fun and interactive ways, making the Biblical concepts work for you

Valuing: a call to action in your life as God is prompting you to respond

If you appreciate using Sharing Scripture as a resource, and you know others who may be interested, please share these newsletters with a friend. Better yet, have that person sign up for this free resource personally. You can do that by calling by calling 800.272.4664 or by emailing us at creativeministryinfo@gmail.com.

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

[Go to Website](#)



www.creativeministry.org | 800.272.4664.