

the invitation

Join YWAM's global prayer

February 11, 2021 – The Invitation
Topic: Loneliness

Join YWAMers around the globe in praying and hearing from God. He is inviting you!



Family Members Hug Through Plastic During COVID-19 Pandemic

This season of consecutive lockdowns, brought on by the Corona virus pandemic, has been a lonely time for many of us. Some have been living alone during weeks of home confinement. Many have been unable to be with family or friends for the celebration of birthdays or Christmas. Some have experienced the illness of loved ones, and have been unable to be physically together at that time. May this month's prayer time offer you a sense of connection with many others around the world, all joining together to pray!

Social isolation has been a particular characteristic of this unusual season. But loneliness can also be part of what we consider more 'normal' life. Indeed, some would say that loneliness is not just a common consequence of life in missions, but also rife in our modern societies. You have probably read something about loneliness among the elderly in Western societies, or loneliness among young people who are connected online but have few real friends, or the loneliness of stay-at-home moms, or the loneliness of

single people living alone, or the loneliness that hits us even when we live in a busy city. The truth is, all of us are likely to experience loneliness at some time in our lives.

Those who choose to make a long-term commitment to working overseas are perhaps especially likely to experience the distress of social isolation at some point. Someone who is relatively new to the language and culture may find it difficult to have meaningful relationships with the nationals. When missionaries repeatedly change location, or their team members change often, it can become hard to make connections that cause us to feel known by others. For these and many other reasons, even when we work in teams it is not unusual to experience seasons of loneliness in missions.

Whatever our current experience of loneliness or connection, together we acknowledge that our need for friends, community and intimacy is legitimate and good. During this time of prayer, we may find ourselves invited by God to grieve the absence of this longed-for connection in this season. Ask yourself how God is inviting you to bring these unmet individual or community needs to him.

Testimonials

There are many personal experiences of loneliness that we could include here, and you will know of others. Since loneliness can be hard to talk about, here we quote two YWAM staff members who are willing to share their experience of loneliness.

M writes:

'I think 2020 might go down in my mind as The Great Exodus. Most of the people I was close to in my community left our location in the past year. As someone who is an extrovert and thrives within community, I felt disoriented as though my equilibrium were off. On top of these changes, we have all been navigating a global pandemic so people have gone into survival mode! I am single and a bit of a novelty because I am older than 25. Many people don't understand my context. So here I am...alone. The culmination of this loneliness, along with the expectation that I should be able to work 24/7 because I do not "have a family" became almost unbearable.'

B writes:

'A big part of being single and living cross-culturally is the area of loneliness. We don't have a built-in social network of family. I remember back to my days when I lived alone, and I was in a team with two other couples. It was very lonely at times. Even with local friends and other relationships, I realized that I wasn't cut out for living on my own.'

Loneliness in Scripture

Psalm 27:10 begins with a statement of utter dejection: 'My father and my mother have forsaken me, 'but it ends with the ultimate reassurance of, 'but Yahweh will take me in.' Loneliness is the opportunity to let the truth penetrate deeply into your heart that when the worst happens, when those who should love you reject and abandon you, you are never alone.

Please join us for YWAM's prayer day on February 11 called The Invitation as we pray about loneliness. If you only have a few moments to pray, pray for YWAMers to resist the lie that we are alone and to embrace our home in Him. And if you have a moment, please let us know how you prayed: prayer@ywam.org.

**TELLING A LONELY PERSON THAT
GOD IS HIS OR HER FRIEND CAN
SOUND VERY HOLLOW. IT ONLY
BECOMES MEANINGFUL WHEN
WE MAKE THE DIVINE
FRIENDSHIP REAL BY MODELING
IT IN OUR OWN RELATIONSHIPS.**

Trevor Hudson

Beyond Loneliness: The Gift of God's Friendship

#kindlequotes

Prepare to Pray:

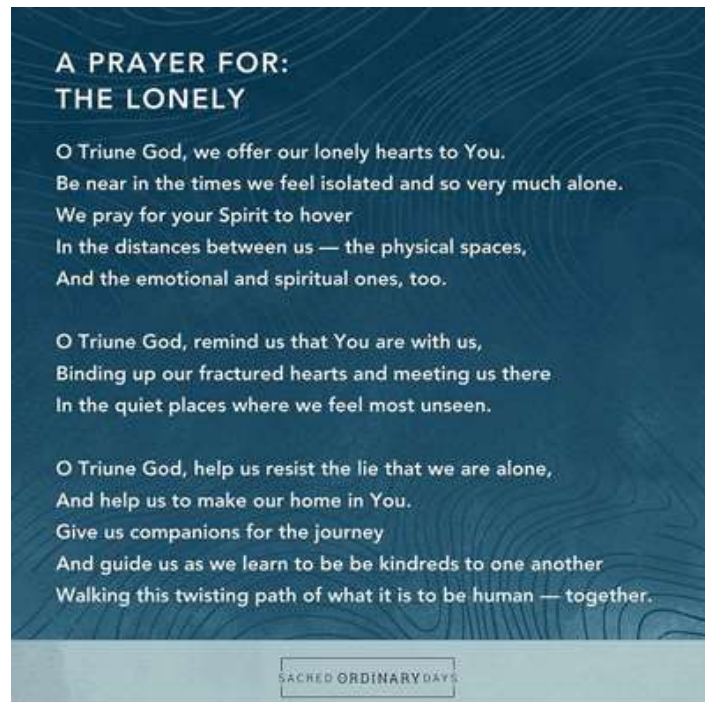
Before coming to prayer, take some time for self-reflection by considering these questions. You might like to journal your responses.

- To what degree are you experiencing loneliness in this season? Give yourself a number between 0 and 10, 0 = not at all, 10 = it is extremely/very challenging at the moment.
- How is loneliness affecting you emotionally (feelings), mentally (your thought life/ability to focus and stay motivated), and physically (sleep patterns, eating, exercise, general health and well-being)?
- How is loneliness impacting your social life (relationships with family, friends, co-workers, nationals) and ministry (ability to reach out to others)?
- How have you been dealing with your loneliness? What has been helpful? What hasn't? Do you notice any unhealthy patterns developing?
- Consider to what extent you may need to walk through this season with the support and companionship of a godly friend or mentor?

Turn your attention to the way God is present to you by reading slowly through Psalm 139:7-18. Pay special attention to the words or phrases that jump out for you.

- As he gazes upon you, in love, today, seeing the extent of your loneliness, what does God feel toward you? What is His heart for you?

- If you could picture God actually being with you today, what would He do or say? How would He respond to you?
- What happens for you, as you encounter God in that place? How do you want to respond?



Pray About Loneliness

Pray for an end to the current causes of social isolation that are leading to an increased experience of loneliness. Ask God to intervene so that meeting together in person will once again be considered safe.

Pray for the ways God might use loneliness in our lives, for our good and for God's formational purposes in us.

Pray for meaningful mentoring relationships in YWAM teams, so that cross-cultural missionaries living in isolating or challenging circumstances can be supported. Pray especially for new workers to be supported well as they transition into their roles, and for those who are more established to find companions to walk alongside them.

Pray for effective help and resources to be available and widely implemented in the areas of interpersonal conflict and unmet role expectations. These are both realities that contribute to a sense of isolation or loneliness.

Pray for strong expressions of shared leadership throughout YWAM. Ask God to bless leaders at every level with an experience of mutual support and trust, both within their teams and with others. Take time to bless your own leaders in the area of close relationships.

Pray for those in different life stages and bless their sense of belonging and inclusion in community. You could specifically mention missionary kids, including those living at home and those who have left home; single people of all ages; those who are married, divorced, or widowed; those living in shared housing and those living alone. If anyone in particular comes to mind, ask the Lord how you could bless him or her in a practical way.

Ask God to show us in practical ways how to prioritize life-giving community. Acknowledge the unmet need for connection within your own community and pray for an increase of those who are able to teach on friendship and community.

Take Action

- Consider the ways you might see loneliness as a call to intimacy. In what ways is God seeking your attention and how will you respond?
- Consider who could you ask to walk with you, as a spiritual companion, in this season and get in touch with him or her.
- Whatever your own experience of loneliness in this season, ask the Holy Spirit to whom you could reach out? Make a plan to connect with them.
- Pursue resources:
 - Beyond Loneliness: The Gift of God's Friendship (Trevor Hudson)
 - The Path of Loneliness: Finding Your Way Through the Wilderness to God (Elisabeth Elliot)
 - In March, look out for resources on the theme of Building Authentic Community on europellc.eu
- Share on [facebook.com/youthwithamission](https://www.facebook.com/youthwithamission), post a picture and add a comment about how you prayed.
- Go to twitter.com; search for #praywithywam and tweet about your prayer time/post a picture. You can also post a photo on Instagram and use the same hashtag, #praywithywam.
- Send an email to prayer@ywam.org letting us know how you prayed and what God revealed to you.

Future Topics:

March 11 – Human Trafficking

Don't Miss The Invitation:

- Sign up for prayer updates. Go to ywam.org, find the "Stay Connected" box on the home page, put in your email address and click "*Sign Up.*"
- Download prayer updates in a specific language. Go to ywam.org/theinvitation. (Currently available in Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Indonesian, French, Thai, Hindi, German or request other languages.)
- Join the conversation about how God is leading in these prayer times. Comment on the Facebook page on the second Thursday at facebook.com/youthwithamission or on Twitter [@ywam](https://twitter.com/ywam), hashtag [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/ywam). You can also post a photo on Instagram and use the same hashtag, [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/ywam).
- You can now listen to The Invitation as a podcast. To sign up or listen to past episodes, go to: ywampodcast.net/prayer.
- If you sense God giving you a word or a direction for YWAM's prayer, please contact us: prayer@ywam.org.

