

The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS *to help you become a better steward*

MAY 2020 • VOLUME 25, ISSUE 5

MUTUALLY ENCOURAGED: THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Never before in our lifetimes has community been as important as it is today. During the past 10 years, naysayers have been claiming that technology, specifically social media, makes today's younger generation incapable of having in-person social interactions and maintaining real relationships. But now we are living in a world where technology is the only way to maintain relationships and engage socially.

With my newfound freedom in the evenings—no ballet, no mentorship meetings, no evening work shifts for my husband, no book club—I find myself excited to finally have time to invite people over. Until I realize that's not possible.

While at the store for necessities, I consistently realized I was much closer to fellow shoppers than the (at the time) recommended six feet of social distancing. I am so used to simply saying, "Excuse me!" and reaching across another shopper's view to grab a brick of cheese or a box of crackers or a can of beans.

Now, instead of my extroverted self looking for ways to engage socially with people whose company I enjoy, I find myself contemplating the ways in which my daily



While at the store for necessities, I consistently realized I was much closer to fellow shoppers than the (at the time) recommended six feet of social distancing.

STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.



“My focus here is on uniting as a community to support and encourage one another—even in a time of crisis such as we find ourselves today.”

interactions with people are either altered or eliminated.

This is a whole new world—a world in which we desperately need community with others to remind ourselves we’re not alone, a world in which that community’s standard ways of connecting are mostly or entirely removed, a world in which we must be creative in order to maintain that community.

Fortunately, this is 2020 not 1918, and we now have tools at our disposal which allow us to stay in touch in real time, rather than waiting weeks between letters. Today, our most basic methods of communication are telephone and texting, and the most advanced allow us to enjoy real-time video storytime with an astronaut floating 220 miles above the surface of the earth. (Yes, that’s really a thing. Google it.)

Actually, I misspoke there. The most advanced technology at our disposal is the human brain. And it desires and requires community—a characteristic hard-wired into humans at creation.

Hebrews 10:25 urges us as believers not to give up meeting together, but to encourage one another. In Romans 1:11-12, Paul writes that he is eager to reconnect personally with the church in Rome, that they would be “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (NIV). Perhaps most apropos for our current situation is 1 Thessalonians 5:14, which says we are to “be patient with everyone” (NIV). After I’ve spent weeks in the same house with the same people, this speaks directly to me!

Many Scriptures indicate that unity as the body of Christ is crucial. (See Romans 12:4-5, Psalm 133:1, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Colossians 3:14, and Ephesians 4:3 for a start). While this concept can be applied in many ways, my focus here is on uniting as a community to support and encourage one another—even in a time of crisis such as we find ourselves today.

How can we do this? I’m sure you can brainstorm your own creative ideas, but here is some inspiration from others to get you started.