

# Learning in Lockdown #3

## The Value of Relationship

by Rev Dan Balsdon, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020 | read online at [www.revdanbalsdon.com](http://www.revdanbalsdon.com)

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### Who are you connected to?

At the start of lockdown, I spent a lot of time on the phone.

I was checking in with people, spending time chatting and being present with people as we all adjusted to the nature of lockdown.

Many people in my churches have been shielding, or choosing to isolate, and lots are not on the internet, and so from the start I could see regular phone calls were going to be incredibly valuable during lockdown.

We reorganised the church pastoral system to ensure everyone would have at least 1 assigned regular contact and encouraged everyone to regularly call each other to share fellowship, friendship and maintain relationship.

The hands down thing that has I call people now, people say they have valued most is the phone calls they have been receiving from each other.



People have shared that lockdown has offered the opportunity to get know each other better. People who live on their own have shared how the phone calls have helped break up their day and left them feeling less alone, that they feel valued, loved, thought about.

That it has not only helped maintain relationships, but that they have grown and deepened.

### What has this meant I have learnt?

I think it has shown me just how essential relationships are for human well-being.

We need one another.

God has created us to be in relationship with one another.

Human interaction is in our DNA.

### But why has it taken lockdown to get to know each other better?

In Luke's gospel we find a story of Jesus and his companions, visiting sisters Mary and Martha.

Mary sits as Jesus feet listening to all he has to say.

Martha is busy doing – organising the hospitality necessary for Jesus and his companions, fretting that Mary is not helping her.

She stops, and says to Jesus – don't you care that my sister is leaving me to do all the work on my own?

Jesus says to her, Martha my child, you are so distracted by many things, but there is only need for one thing.

Jesus doesn't criticise Martha for wanting to be hospitable.

But he does suggest that Martha may be letting the doing get in the way of what really matters.

*To read the story in full, take a look at Luke chapter 10*

I wonder if the absence of meetings and events has meant that the distraction of doing has been removed, and suddenly we've discovered new ways of being with one another. Where we can be interested in one another without the distraction of the next task that needs doing or event that needs planning.

And I've heard testimony to the same with people's relationships with God.

Not being busy doing has meant people have been able to spend more time focused on the one thing that matters – their relationship with God.

**Now what might this mean we learn from lockdown?**

The value and importance of relationship – with God and with one another.

**What does that mean for the future as we begin to emerge from lockdown?**

I'm not suggesting we shouldn't have face-to-face activities and events.

But I do find God's Spirit challenging me to reflect on what may need to change, what we may need to do differently, to keep relationship with God and one another as the one thing that matters.

***What ways of being together can we discover  
that do not tie us up in so much doing that we can't be?***