

From The Rector's Study, Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, July 18th, Pentecost VIII, the Value of Community
2 Samuel 7:1-14a, Psalm 89:20-37, Ephesians 2:11-22, Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

It is very difficult at this time still to find balance. The balance between the times alone and in community. I have said and experienced the presence of God when alone, but the kingdom of God in community. That may be why I like the banquet as a metaphor of the kingdom. But we have not been able to experience the banquet for some time now.

Jesus in today's Gospel was able to be alone with the disciples and also spend time with the crowds. His problem is the opposite of the way I feel today.....

His time alone in prayer was often interrupted by people finding him and wanting something from him. We on the other hand are strongly discouraged from gathering together.

In Ephesians; Paul talks about Jesus bringing together those who are near and far off. Paul is talking about the Jews as near and the Gentiles as far off.

Ephesians 2:17 so he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

For us today, there seems to be a couple of meanings. There are different ways of looking at who is near and who is far off. One way is to look at whom in our society and community feel included and cared for, and who feel neglected and on the margins, falling through the cracks? And for us then to find ways of including them in the banquet.

And at this time of isolation and restrictions, all of us in one way or another feel far off, and don't feel the peace of God in Christ. We don't get to gather in banquets and thus don't experience the Kingdom of God. But there is peace, and Jesus came to proclaim peace to those of us who feel at times we are far off.

The contact we make with one another, as unsatisfactory it is, there is still the connection and the support for one another, and the knowing we are all in it together and thus we each are not alone in feeling the frustration from lack of gathering together.

*And the encouragement of the words of Psalm 62 For God alone my soul in silence waits; * from him comes my salvation.*

So for me, these words of the psalm are encouraging, but it suggests to me, that all I receive comes from God, the words and actions of all of you originate from God, and that my salvation, and being able to be at the banquet fully again, will come, I just have to be patient and trust that in due time.....

Amen