

Making Meals For One

“You will leave me all alone.”

John 16:32

Recently I was visiting a church on Sunday to preach. Many times I had been to this particular church over the years to speak. I have come to know and love the people there and had dinner in the homes of many of them.

As I was singing along with the congregation in the early part of the service I noticed a friend of mine across the aisle and two or three rows ahead of me. I made a mental note that he and his wife sat in that spot for all the years that they attended that church.

Today it was different and I was saddened. My friend was alone. A couple of months earlier his beloved wife of many years had suddenly left for heaven. Somehow it did not seem right for him to be alone.

Then I noticed a sweet little blond headed girl 4-5 years of age walk up the aisle and sit down beside him. I knew she was his granddaughter. She had noticed that her beloved granddad was alone so she left her parents and went up to keep him company.

I thought about how that man

would likely go home to make a meal for one person, himself. Yes, his adult children did a lot for him, the church family also were doing a variety of things to help him, but at the end of the day, he went home to an empty house to prepare his meal.

Many people in that position choose to eat in restaurants every day in order to be with others at mealtime. Certainly their table might sit 2-4 people and only he/she was there. But voices were heard from different directions in that public place and so, for an hour or so, the person was not alone at an important family time.

Loneliness is a most dreadful form of suffering. Those experienced in the art of torture know that solitary confinement of the victim is an efficient way to break down the person and destroy their ability to resist.

It could be the death of a spouse, a parent, a child, the loneliness that follows is one of the most tragic aspects of the new situation. Our Lord experienced such loneliness when the disciples deserted Him in Gethsemane when He was betrayed. But the Father was still with

Him and He was comforted in the context of loss. However, on the cross even the Father turned from Him and He was utterly alone. That was tragic beyond description.

If you are making meals for one these days turn to the situation of Jesus and bring to mind His extreme sorrow at being abandoned by everyone. Keep in mind that He did that for His people, the ones who would never know the depths of loneliness and suffering that was His portion. You may be alone today from a human perspective but if you love Jesus, He is with you and has committed Himself to being with you now and forever.

Next time you bow your head to give thanks for your meal for one, remember that Jesus is the unseen Guest at every meal. Jesus is with you and knows your pain. He will give you the peace that passes all understanding. Tell Him how painful it is to be lonely, and call on Him to make His presence wonderfully known today.

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