

Call&Care

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It's good
to talk

We live in what have been unprecedented times.

Never in human history has there been a lockdown on social contact and movement as we have experienced during 2020 and 2021.

Other than those within our households, the closest we are permitted to get near to people is two metres and even then only in a few strictly regulated situations.

Social connections we take for granted have disappeared.

So what has gone?

1. The ability to go to shops, cafes, bars and all the associated social contact these include – such as meeting friends for coffee – are no longer possible.
2. Social gatherings, coffee mornings, and clubs that so many people rely upon for company are not operating
3. Work meetings have been replaced with online alternatives
4. Church services are limited or have ceased, and some have been replaced with online versions. These do not offer the same fellowship and social support opportunities, even if technology on both sides gives access to them, which is not possible for everyone.
5. Visiting family and friends in their own homes or in residential care and hospitals has been seriously curtailed

We all need social contact. This has a different degree of importance for each individual.

Opportunities to meet and see people, to talk and express how we feel, to feel part of a group or society, with a sense of belonging, are very important.

Digital media can meet some of these needs, but unless it offers a place to talk freely including one to one then there is something seriously lacking.

It is truly good to be able to talk, to share and to offload. It is very difficult to do this at 2 metres or more especially outside and walking.

We need to consider those we know, the people in our neighbourhoods, communities and Church, and think about what contact they are used to having and what they are missing at the moment.

We also need to ask them what they would find helpful.

Some, who are able to, are using Skype/Facetime/Zoom and other digital techniques to communicate. However, there is one tried and tested method that almost all of us have access to and that is the telephone.

The telephone is a means of communication that we can utilise fully in the current situation.

Helplines are experiencing a significant demand at this time. The service I manage, Premier Lifeline: the National Christian Helpline, has been answering an increased number of calls.

Amongst these have been many more calls from people with mental health needs, who are more isolated as many of their support services have shut.

There is and will remain a need for human contact. It truly is good to talk.

What does seem strange is that there seems to be a reticence on some people's part to make the first call. To initiate contact.

We are all in the same boat on this tumultuous sea and yet it is all too easy to feel others are too busy, or to wait for social niceties to contact. Many calls are normally related to shared activities, and because these are not happening there is no "natural" reason for a call.

In this situation I believe the Church and community groups are strategically placed to look after those within the communities they serve.

Each local situation is different and the details will differ but through these Call and Care videos we aim to offer a framework of ideas to encourage safe supportive contact to be put in place.