



2124 First Street, Atwater, CA 95301
Phone: 209-358-5427, Fax: 209-358-5427

ATWATER BAPTIST CHURCH

Father's Day

June 21, 2020

“Our Father in heaven...”

As I reflect on this Father's Day, first of all, congratulations to all our fathers and to those who have played the role of father in the lives of so many! Some of us were fortunate enough have two loving parents; some grew up in single-parent households, and some were raised by relatives, including aunts and uncles, even grandparents. To all those who helped raise us, Thank You for giving us a foundation for our lives!

I grew up in a generation where fathers played their feelings “close to the vest,” holding emotions in check, guarding their inner thoughts, hopes, joys, and worries. Even saying “I love you” was a rare and special thing. Maybe it was that way for my father because he grew up in a mining town, Kellogg, Idaho. Maybe it was because in the national culture men were supposed to be “tough.” Maybe it was a hereditary thing or a “men are from Mars, women from Venus” kind of thing.

In any case, with the advent of the relational revolution, all of us became more aware of interpersonal relationships and the importance of communication as a key to building good marriages and happy families.

Recently I had the opportunity to share with my two sons some of my thoughts and feelings about my evolving medical condition. Of necessity we were social distancing—both live with their families in the Washington D.C. area! As the conversation became more sensitive and my sons were demonstrating a tremendous ability to understand and relate to my feelings, I choked up. I was filled with gratitude for their lives, relief at being accepted for who I am, and joy during a difficult time in life.

In a way, I realized, they were parenting me, while we were sharing together, and the parent (father)—child relationships went to a whole new level. We

were more than father-son, more than peers or colleagues, we were brothers in a profound relationship, part of the family of God!

What does this mean?

When one of us is down, we can help the other up. We weep with those who are weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing (Romans 12:15). None of us needs or is meant to live our lives of faith alone! It can be easy to withdraw into ourselves during this time of COVID-19, and the national civil unrest.

But as believers we don't have to go it alone. We can use our phones to stay in touch, we can pray for God's will to be done for our nation as we follow the news, and we can follow leaders of integrity in the arenas of health care, societal care, and faith. When one of us is down we treat each other as faithful brothers and sisters and parents and help each other out: "Two are better than one...a threefold cord is not easily broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, KJV)

When we are both down, we go beyond ourselves to our Heavenly Father, whom Jesus taught us to seek in our ongoing prayer life (Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus gave us the Lord's prayer "Our father," Matthew 6:9 because his own disciples wanted help in knowing how to pray. If they needed help, so do you and I. So, the Lord's Prayer becomes a good model for us to help us in our difficult times.

Whether we're a father, a friend or a relative, we realize this Father's Day once again the importance of trusting God and developing honest and open relationships. As Jesus said, "as the Father loved me so I have loved you" John 15:9, which means we no longer have to be Lone Ranger Christians, but can share together the all-embracing love of God!

God really is "Our Father."

Again, Happy Father's Day!

Sharing with you,

Pastor John



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