

# *Steeple News*

**January 2025**

## **A Valuable New Year's Resolution**

As you look to the New Year, establish some goals and perhaps make some resolutions for the year 2025; may I suggest that one of the things you might consider is the role of prudent friendships in your life. Our friendship with others is one of the most important issues in our lives in terms of support and happiness. The Greek poet Euripides said, "Life has no blessing like a prudent friend."

Most people do not seem to know how important good interpersonal relationships are to their mental and emotional well being. When adults are asked to identify that one thing which makes them most happy, a significant number will admit that what makes them most happy, or the most said, is their personal relationships with others. Very often this is more important than employment, money or material things.

We all need stable relationships in our lives. There is value in close relationships even though we risk being hurt by making ourselves vulnerable. Close friendships help us to discover that our own problems and feeling are not unique. Friends often have similar problems - and joys - to share.

Our lives are enriched through meaningful relationships. Perhaps more than any other factor, the quality of our human ties determines the quality of our lives. So, a high priority should be the building of good relationships with our family and friends through open and honest communication.

When we are short on friendships, it might be because we are not willing to devote the energy to make them happen. We assume that it will happen automatically, but it doesn't. We must take an interest in other people and that requires time, effort and concern.

Most often, we are guarded about what we share. We stick to role-defined behavior or focus on our positive attributes in order to avoid rejection. But if relationships are to develop, we have to take the risk of being honest about our feelings.

Psychological studies have been done and they support the idea that concern for others is a prescription for reducing stress in life. Researchers say that involvement with others and concern for their problems work wonders. On the other hand, if we are self-centered, we experience more anxiety, more depression, more hostility and more stress.

I would say that the simplest, and yet most effective, advice ever given comes from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, "Whatsoever you would have me do unto you, do so also to them." That adoration is the epitome of prudent friendship.

Rev. Hans Lillejord