

# Lonely hearts and holidays

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

We are ending the final week of normalcy, if that were possible, before heading straight into the holiday season. Unfortunately, what for many is the most joyous time can be a period of isolation and loneliness for others. It is tragic to realize that episodes of depression and suicide skyrocket during this time of year when others are breaking out their holiday decorations and cheer.

Behind many of the front doors in homes throughout our valley are hurting people who spend too much time alone. During this season when memories of yesteryear and good times of a distant past become acute, some people find themselves in a very dark place simply waiting for the holidays to be over. This is a sad reality of what exists in the hearts of some of our neighbors.

If this is a season of giving, and sharing, there must be a call to meet some of the needs of those in our community who need connection. I am so grateful to each person who does this already. Is there an extra spot at your dinner table this holiday season? Maybe you are the one who was planning on spending the time alone in front of the television. Why not create a space and invitation list for your own holiday celebration with all new friends?

This Thanksgiving and Christmas, once again, many of us will be in Libbey Park to share the special day with new friends and old. This tradition, which is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, has evolved from simply a ministry to homeless to a fellowship of anyone who would have spent the day alone. Is there anyone you know that you should send or bring? You are an important part of this community and are invited to share in the turkey and gravy, an essential festival of love for people. You can check out the web site for details.

If the words of Jesus mean anything at all, and I am convinced they mean everything, they must transform the way we see ourselves in relation to God and other people. The fruitful result is a growing love that is palpable and real. If God's spirit resides in his people

as the Bible says, and I believe he does, then we are sent out to do the work of God's kingdom on earth. Surely this means breaking with some traditions in order to form new ones that spread the good news of Jesus' love to hurting hearts; after all, we do call this the Holy Day (holiday) season.

To read other articles by Pastor Dan visit [Ojai Valley News Articles](#)

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

## **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:45am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

## **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

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