

Hello, I'm Denise Satrape, Ron and I are the Lead Pastors here at Christian Life church, and I am so blessed you have joined us on this 40 day prayer journey as we draw close to the Lord. Our keynote verse for the year is from John chapter 15:4 where we are encouraged to draw close to God in an active vibrant relationship with Him; and when we do, we will live fruitful lives. So, what does it mean... to abide? It means, to be living in a present state of connecting. It is a relational word not just a *positional* word.

Some have a hard time comprehending that God the Creator of all Heaven and Earth is a **Relational Being**, yet we are given a PROMISE in **James 4:8 that when we Draw Near to God, He draws near to us.**

One of the most amazing aspects of Christianity is that we serve a God who is "**near**" and not a God who is distant and unapproachable. The word "*near*" implies closeness, ...like a relative, friend, or a neighbor who is readily available to you.

Psalms 145: 18 says- The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.

*So many of us grew up with the concept that God is **there**, but not that "God is **near**."* Being "*there*" and being "*near*" communicates two very different things. I can be "*there*" and not have a relational connect with someone. Have you ever attended a group gathering and discovered that other people you know were there at the same time, but you were not near to them? Or maybe you thought you were in a relationship with someone only to discover that you may have lived or worked in the same place but where **never near** to them?

When one understands the true meaning of this word "near" you realize that one cannot be "near" without first being "there;" **but being "near" is being "there" with a relational connection and purpose.**

Jeremiah 23:23 says "Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "And not a God afar off?"

As I pondered on the verses that communicated God's nearness, I discovered that:

- God draws near when we just simply call upon Him
- God draws near when we call upon Him looking for truth
- When God draws near His loving presence alleviates our fears

Lamentations 3:57 *You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, "Do not fear!"*

When God draws near, He wants us to be "*near*" and not just "*there*." God wants us to have a relational connect with Him that goes beyond our need of Him. When I draw "*near*" I also discover who He really is, and it causes my trust to be made firm and strong.

Psalms 73:28 *But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God and made Him my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.*

As we press into these last days of the fast, don't just make a commitment to **be there** with God, but pursue being near to Him and if you do...you will discover a nearness that will change the dynamics of your relational connect with Him!

We used to sing a song that said... Now that Your near, everything is different! I remember when I first discovered that I could draw near to God...things in my life truly

became very different. I encountered the truth that I was not alone, that God had my back, and He was with me all the time and He loved me beyond words.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that your people will move from being there with you to ***being near*** to you. I pray they discover the love you have for them and the power that is released in and for them as they draw near. Bring a paradigm shift in their understanding and cause them to comprehend just how different their life can be when they draw near to thee. In Jesus Name Amen