



Christmas - a time to show love

The most successful ingredient to good relationships is _____?

I remember hearing a story about an elderly respected lecturer at a university lecturing on relationships. He began by asking his audience to give him a four letter word ending in 'k' that meant 'intercourse'. The stunned lecture hall was silent. No one was game enough to give this distinguished gentleman a reply. After what seemed an eternity, he looked over his glasses and said, "I know what you are all thinking, but the word I am looking for is TALK."

Talking is one of the major ways to build quality relationships. In fact, there are at least seven ways or 'languages' in which we can communicate love to each other and build our relationships¹. These are:

1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality Time
3. Receiving Gifts
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch
6. Obedience
7. Respect

Whilst all seven ways are important, each one of us for various reasons tends to favour at least one or two of these seven 'love languages', and if we

want our relationships to blossom, we need to discover what our partner's and friend's 'primary love language' is, and then seek to meet it. For example, if your partner's 'love tank' is kept full through spending quality time with them, then just giving a box of chocolates will not be interpreted as very loving! Or if your friend's primary love language is words of affirmation, it will be much more important for you to say to that person just how much you respect them and honour them, rather than just cook up a magnificent roast!



Christmas is a time of communication. A time when we try to express love and kindness to our family and friends, and even our enemies. We wish for peace, happiness and love the whole world over.

That first Christmas, God chose to communicate His love for the world to



(1) The first five of these come from the book by Gary Chapman, "The Five Love Languages".

us. Notice how through coming to earth in the baby Jesus born at Bethlehem, God fulfilled every love language so that all people could experience His love, no matter what love language they favoured:

1. Words of Affirmation. An angel appeared to Mary, saying, "*Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.*"² Wow! How positive is that!!

The angels then appeared and spoke to the shepherds, "*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be*



for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."³ And when Jesus grew up, he continued on with such positive words, saying to outcasts "*Neither do I condemn you*"⁴ and "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*"⁵

God wants to tell you this Christmas that you are VERY special to Him!

2. Quality Time. God came as a baby - He didn't run away! He was now in the world so that all who wished to linger with Him could, and He would give them their undivided attention. As an adult, He spent lots of time just walking and hanging out with His disciples and friends. Once some people came to Jesus and asked where He was staying. He replied, "*Come, and you will see,*" and so they went and saw where He was staying, and spent that day with Him⁶. And after Jesus had died and risen again

from the dead, He said, "*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"⁷

God also wants to spend time with YOU this Christmas. Will you make time for Him?

3. Receiving Gifts. Not only did Jesus receive gifts of gold, incense and myrrh from wise men at His birth⁸, but Jesus Himself was God's gift to humanity⁹. Through Jesus, God gave to all who believe in Him the gifts of salvation, the forgiveness sins, and the Holy Spirit¹⁰. These gifts are for all people, and every person can tangibly experience them!

Jesus thinks you are so special that He is willing to move heaven and earth to meet your deepest needs! Open up your heart to Him, and He will give you Himself!!

4. Acts of Service. Jesus came to earth not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many¹¹. When Jesus grew up, His life was characterized by serving others, helping the poor, and even washing His disciples' feet¹². His ultimate act of service on our behalf was when He went to the cross to die for our sins to bring us back into harmony with God¹³.

This Christmas, Jesus wants to take away all your burdens. Will you let Him?

5. Physical Touch. Jesus was fully human. God through Jesus became like one of us, and we could touch Him, and He could touch us! Mary and



(2) Luke 1:28. (3) Luke 2:10-11. (4) John 8:11. (5) Matthew 11:28. (6) John 1:38,39. (7) Matthew 28:20. (8) Matthew 2:11. (9) John 3:16. (10) Luke 24:46-49. (11) Mark 10:45. (12) John 13:2-10. (13) Romans 3:23-25; 5:1.

Joseph could hold Him in their arms. And when He grew up, He touched lepers and other outcasts of His day¹⁴, and showed through this that, yes, they too were accepted and loved by God! God came to earth to touch us and show us that he really does care for our situation.

God wants to embrace you with His love, because you are His beloved creation!

6. Obedience. When Jesus came to earth, He not only came in obedience to the will of His Father¹⁵, but He was also coming to fulfil the desires of all people down through the ages who were crying out to God for a Saviour!¹⁶ God answered their cry! And Jesus went on to tell us that we could ask God for anything that we wished, and if our motives are pure, God will answer our prayers!¹⁷ Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you!"¹⁸

Jesus is willing to answer your heartfelt requests. Ask, and then wait to see how He will fulfil them!

7. Respect. Last but not least, notice how that when Jesus came to earth He came in humility. He came as a baby, in a remote place. He didn't force Himself upon anybody. He let Mary know in advance through the angel Gabriel of what was going to happen¹⁹. And He continues to respectfully wait at the door of people's lives, knocking, leaving the choice with us whether we will invite Him in²⁰. He even loves us enough to let us reject Him, but also loves us enough to let us know the consequences of that rejection²¹. Jesus came with gentleness, not force.

Jesus loves you so much that He is willing to walk with you through any

questions and doubts you may have about Him!

Yes, God loves us comprehensively, and yes, God loves you individually! And did you know that today, God wants to use you to continue to pass on that love to others! God wants to live through you so that you can be His mouthpiece, presence, gift, servant, and hands and feet to the world!

How will you be showing your love to those close to you this Christmas? Remember that giving a present is just one of at least seven love languages. Positive words, or just spending time listening, or volunteering to help clean up, or a hug or a loving hand on the shoulder, acting on advice, or being willing to change your mind, could be just that extra ingredient that will make your Christmas special.

And I hope that it really will be for you!

God bless you, Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

Let us pray:

*Father in heaven,
Thank you for how much you love us!
Thank you that you have met every need of ours through Jesus Christ your Son.*

Please help us this Christmas and the rest of the year to be a demonstration of your love across all areas. And help us to grow in understanding all people we come across, so that we can show the right love at the right time.

We bless you, Lord, and praise your holy Name!

Amen.



(14) Mark 1:40-42. (15) John 6:38; 8:28,29. (16) eg Psalm 61. (17) John 14:13,14; James 4:1-3. (18) Matthew 7:7. (19) Luke 1:26,27.

(20) Revelation 3:20. (21) John 3:17-21,36.

Christmas Day

BBQ!

(2003)

If you have nothing to do on Christmas day at lunch time, why not join me for a BBQ under the gum trees?



Time: 12.00pm

Where: Sullivan Reserve

It would be great to see you there!

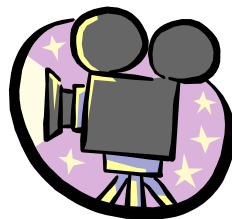
Celebration Sundays 2004

Our monthly Community Church Services will be starting up again on **February 15th 2004.**

I look forward to joining with you in these next year!!

Sullivan's Reserve Movie Night!

**(Hosted by Darebin Community
Building Project)**



Saturday 7th February 2004

**6.30pm - 7.30pm Hand
Drumming Workshops**

**Other activities include a
Kite Making workshop for
children, Local music group,
and a Sausage Sizzle.**

**8.30pm: the movie
"Treasure Planet" on the
big screen**

(for more information, please
contact City of Darebin Leisure
Services on 9230 4305)

Peter Kutschker
**Community Chaplain, East Preston /
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5/3 McLennan Place, Preston, 3072

A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church
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