

## Lengthen your Cords

We continue once again with this broader theme of '**Going Deeper**' with God and recognising our need for greater capacity – we need enlarge our tent!

The text we have been using in Isaiah 54:2 uses the words '*enlarge, stretch, lengthen and strengthen*'. These are all great words of encouragement to us at this time.

### 1. **How long are your Cords?**

The cords mentioned in our text are the guide or stabilising ropes that hold a tent up, in place and fastened to the ground. (In most modern tents some of this is now done by flexible tent poles and guide rods)

These ropes meet a number of really practical needs. They provide **Stability** (i.e. when the wind is blowing) and they create **Tension** against which the structure can be erected.

Interesting that the comment here is about lengthening or extending. A couple of things have to happen when you lengthen your ropes. They have to be stronger, often higher and greater tension.

### 2. **Relationships that Support**

One of the ways in which we can apply this picture of 'tent ropes' is in Relationships. Ropes like relationships can connect and bind.

There is in the Genesis statement "*It is not good for man to be alone*" (Genesis 2:18) a compelling truth that we all need meaningful relations. (Family, Friends, others)

Relationships are intended for support. I love the text of Traditional Marriage Ceremony goes - "*The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity ...*" That is so it!

We need relationships that allow **communication** (someone to talk to); that allow the building of a **common story** – (my journey becomes our journey); that allow **respect & affirmation**; that allow **support & wisdom** ... just to name a few.

When these relationships are present in our lives they give us the lift and the stability that we need in the good and the bad times – AD, the cup of soup with the furry arms!

### **3. Relationships that Challenge**

Funnily enough we also need Relationships that generate a certain amount of Tension. Paul talks a bit about this when reflecting on the body - '*the eye cannot say to the hand*' ... I don't need you, get away. leave me alone! Sometimes we need people who prod us, challenge us and even provoke us.

Tension is the product of two different forces; two positions holding their ground. Night needs Day, hot needs cold, sour needs sweet, black needs white.

Great life is about managing tension in relationships and harnessing it as an energy and an opportunity.

In ministry Prophets will often challenge Teachers and visa versa; Pastors will be concerned about the sheep that are, Evangelists about the sheep still to be ... and so on. This is good. This is a healthy tension!

Personally, we need to be with people who are different to us. They challenge our comfort zones; they offend our sensibilities; they provoke reactions within us - some good, some bad! (The Disciples – a zealot, a tax collector, a student, a fisherman)

### **4. We will not go Deeper alone!**

In this context I believe that in our journey to go 'Deeper' with God. He is saying to us - this will not just involve you personally, but will involve you doing this in relationship with others.

So in the weeks ahead we need to be consciously building stronger relationships; tighter networks of personal and relational support; most with those we connect with comfortably, but also with those we feel less comfortable with.

Its time to lengthen our Relationship ropes and to be building bigger, stronger and more dynamic friendships and partnerships with others.

***Next week I want to develop this in a particular way - as part of our Vision Sunday event!***