

# Refresh Women 6th July 2025

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Preacher: Helen Pett

[ 0 : 00 ] So I've got a little exercise for you to do before we start off, to get our brains working so that we wake up to listen. I wanted to ask you this question. I want you to think about the relationships that you've got in your life right now.

Or even think about special relationships that you've had in the past. I know for some of you that will be the case. Can you all hear me by the way? Am I loud enough? Yeah, okay.

So who makes you feel more authentically you? So just makes you feel like yourself. You know you feel like you.

Makes you feel safe or made you feel safe. Could be a past relationship, I realise that, or somebody right now. It could even be your relationship with God.

Who makes you feel authentically yourself? Who makes you feel safe? Just maybe write that down. And what is it about that relationship that makes you feel that way?

[ 1 : 06 ] What is it about that relationship? Just have a think for a few seconds. And then as you're just thinking about that, I want you to think about how has that relationship come to be what it is?

I realise it could be a partner. It could be a child that you've had. It could be a friend, a long-term friendship. It could be somebody that you've met even recently.

But how has that relationship happened? Just think about the kind of journey that that relationship has taken you on. Maybe it's a life event.

Maybe it's shared interests. Maybe it's that they're part of your family. They're part of your story.

Maybe it's a life event. How has that relationship become what it is?

And then the final question for just this piece, and then I want you to hold on to this, is what do you do to keep that relationship alive? Or what did you do, if it was in the past?

[ 2 : 22 ] What did you do to keep that relationship alive? Just really think about that question. What did you do? It's all very quiet.

You're very immediate. Unless I've been at school, I know. Okay.

I think it'll all hopefully become clear as we go on, but we will come back to it. So I'm going to pray in a second, just give this to God.

But I think the caveat that I just wanted to say at the beginning is there's a reason for this passage tonight. And, you know, I loved the fact that it talks about intimacy, and that's the message version that we read.

So it's beautiful. It talks about intimacy in a couple of the places in it. And the two pieces that I've pulled out for that postcard for you are those two sections in that reading that talk about intimacy.

[ 3 : 51 ] And I want to tell you a little bit of a story, the backstory to how I came to really feel God give this to me for tonight, and a little bit about my story.

So forgive me for some of you that will have heard a little bit of it before, or a lot of it before. But I just wanted to say as well that this week, it's been a bit of a journey.

And, you know, I've had this thing about preaching on Sunday night, and I've got this talk to do and to prepare, and it needs to be powerful, and it needs to be good, and it needs to be, you know, all of that stuff. And actually, I just felt to God, when I had that dream, and I sat down and wrote it, that I just had that sense of, I'm just on a journey like all of you.

I'm just on the journey, and I'm learning, and I have my life experiences, and God is speaking to me, as I'm sure he's speaking to all of us at different times.

And this really tonight is, the caveat is, I need to hear what I have got to share as much as anybody else in the room. Is that fair?

[ 4 : 55 ] I really do. This is not me preaching at anybody. I'm as in need of hearing this word from God as anybody else, and more so, probably.

So we're going on a bit of a journey together, if that's all right. So Lord Jesus, thank you for bringing us together. Thank you for this space.

Thank you for this word, Lord, that you have laid on my heart. Thank you for the journey to get to it, and for what you've been speaking into my heart over these last eight weeks, really.

And I pray for every single woman in the room, from the youngest to the eldest, that Lord, all of the words, all of the stories, Lord, from it, you will just speak personally to every single person.

You'll speak intimately. You'll speak what they need to hear. There is no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus, only love.

[ 6 : 00 ] And God, I pray that you will anoint these words, Lord. Allow me to just communicate your heart, and you will have your way, Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen. So, I gave my life to Jesus when I was seven years old at Sunday school. Very, very definite morning at Sunday school when we were given the chance, and I frog-marched my friend Terrence up to the front to give his life to Jesus as well. Bless him. I'm not sure he did actually want to at the time, but he did anyway.

The great news is he went on to lead a church, so I don't feel guilty about it. And that is nearly 50 years ago.

55 years old now, so we're getting close to 50 years. And there have been some amazing times in my journey with God. There's also been some real battles and some tough times.

[ 7 : 04 ] And the last five years have what I would call been the dark night of my soul, really. COVID started that pre-COVID.

I actually felt like I was in a good place. I was bearing fruit. I was feeling, let's go. And leading the Refresh Cafe on a Friday morning with some of the team here. And then COVID came.

And it brought so much to so many of our lives, as we know. Alex, my husband, was really poorly with COVID. And took a long time to recover and amazingly came through it.

And then, just as we were coming through that, and I was recovering from COVID as well. Isabella and I'd had it. I knew that something wasn't right and I was not well. And I was putting it down to the menopause.

And went to see the doctor. Finally got an appointment in that September. And realised quite quickly that there's something seriously wrong.

[ 8 : 03 ] And had lots of tests. And then on the 16th of December 2020, which was our 20th wedding anniversary, I had my diagnosis of ovarian cancer.

And we were supposed to be staying at our beautiful hotel and celebrating. And instead we were sitting in the car park at St. Michael's with a cup of tea and a sandwich.

And just waiting to go in and find out what was happening. And it was ovarian cancer. It had spread from the fallopian tube.

So it was already really serious. So I had to have massive surgery for that a few weeks later. And in the process discovered that I had the BRCA gene mutation.

So obviously my team, because things had been so serious, had to have more surgery. Chemotherapy had made me very unwell.

[ 9 : 03 ] And affected my mental health. And for me, I think at that point, I just felt that huge sense of loss of control. And it leaves you in shock.

You know, you're on this journey. And for any of you that have been through that yourself, it is, you know, all of a sudden, yeah, it is just this massive shock. And so I was going through trauma.

I'd been disconnected from a lot of loved ones. It was life-changing physically and mentally. And I was seeking help to recover and to heal. And relieved to be alive and blessed to enjoy aspects of life.

But I think the biggest sadness for me coming out of that season was this impact on my relationship with God. And it was understandable because obviously there'd been this trauma.

And amazingly, actually, in the process, going through it all, I never doubted that God was with me or that he loved me. That he'd shown me time and again in it that he was with me.

[ 10 : 12 ] There were some beautiful, miraculous moments in it. There was a moment, God reminded me, when I went in for my double mastectomy.

And I had to go into the hospital on my own. And I was in a place where you're sort of shutting down. You're preparing for it. You know, you're in, obviously, you're just kind of getting on with it.

And I had to walk in on my own. And I had my letter and I couldn't find the desk. I couldn't find where I was supposed to be going. Huge hospital. And I remember walking through just feeling like, God, I need you to be here in this moment with me.

I need your help. And as I walked through the, those of you that know the hospital south of me particularly, it's massive. It's like an airport, isn't it? And I walked through and looking at my letter and I was just, you know, disorientated.

And there's a lift shaft in the middle. And as I walked past the lift shaft, this nurse came out, this little nurse. And I just thought, I'll ask her where I'm going.

[11:14] So I turned to her and I just said, excuse me, could you tell me where I'm supposed to be going to have this surgery? Showed her the letter. And she just looked up at me and she said, Helen? And I looked down.

She literally is about this high. And she said, Helen, it's Natalie. And I literally, I hadn't recognised her, but years before I'd worked with Natalie at the charity that I worked with, I had no idea she was a nurse, no idea she was at the hospital.

And she was working in the heart unit at this point. She was on duty that morning. She said, what are you doing here? And I, you know, a couple of minutes I just filled her in. She had no idea. We hadn't seen each other for years. And she just said, I know exactly where you're going.

And she took a hold of my hand and she walked me to the gate, praying for me in tongues all the way, just with me. You know, those moments of in the darkness, in the desperation, me nothing to give, clinging on literally.

And God, just there, present. So last year, having come through the surgery and recovered, I went along to Wildfires Festival, which is something that Isabel has, we've gone to as a family for the last couple of years.

[12:34] And I find myself in a place where I'm, you know, I'm sort of four years down the line and nearly five years and feeling that sense of, I don't want to be in this place anymore.

I don't want to be stuck. I don't want to be feeling this numbness, if you like, and actually feeling quite angry, you know, that this had happened.

And understandably, you know, we do feel like that when these things happen. And despite my own state of mind and how grumpy I was for camping and having to cut short our holiday and go to this festival where I didn't really want to be, I found myself sitting there on the first morning of the evening session had been the night before and Jackie Pullinger was speaking.

For those of you that know Jackie Pullinger, well, that had already left me feeling like I didn't even know whether I was a Christian, to be fair. I mean, honestly, it was off the charts. The next morning was R.T. Kendall.

And I had heard about R.T. Kendall and I had read reviews of some of his books. I've never actually got into his books because they just seem a little bit too highbrow for me. But he was the next speaker, this 85-year-old, and he climbed up the stairs and helped up the stairs.

[13:47] He'd flown all the way from America to speak. And he had the most amazing message for us. And there were 8,000 people in the tent, 800 in the youth tent.

And I found myself listening to this talk. And he was giving this challenge to us as a church to wake up to the church of God is on the move and wake up. And he needs us to be joining in with what he's doing on the earth at the moment.

Don't we all need to be rallied? And I was just livid, honestly. I was just so angry. I just felt really cross about the whole thing and found myself really grumpy.

By the way, if you want to hear any of the talks from the Wildfires conference last year, including those two, they're all online. And I highly recommend. If you want to be challenged, that's the warning ahead of time.

So I'm there. And he did an appeal at the end. And I, honestly, sometimes if these things, I don't know whether it's ever happened to you, but I found myself down at the front before I'd even decided I wanted to be there.

[14:49] I sort of marched to the front of the tent and really cross. And thinking, you know, I don't even know why I'm here. But I was just angry. I was angry with God and thinking, I am numb and I am feeling completely asleep and not really connecting.

But I am literally traumatized. I've been through five years of trauma. And I'm sure some of you in the room will identify.

And if it's not right now, you've had that in your life. And here's what happened. I stood at the front and I cried and I was really cross. And I just thought, you know, if I feel like this, I'm sure a lot of other people feel like this.

And we are very good friends with Pete Gregg, who some of you will have known and read. Alex went to uni with Pete and he was standing right in front of me. He leads Wildfires Conference. And I tapped, before I knew it, I tapped him on the shoulder and I said, Pete, I've just got something to share. I mean, I do feel asleep and I do feel numb.

[15:55] And I'm challenged. Obviously, I'm challenged. But I don't know what to do about it. I literally don't know what to do. I'm going to therapy. And I was literally just spurting it all out to this poor guy who's trying to lead the whole event.

And I just said, if I feel like that, I know that other people feel like I do. And I feel like we need to give people an opportunity to hear that God's not mad with them.

God actually loves them. And he wants them, he wants to heal those that are traumatized, actually. And he disappeared off. And then he came back about, well, he went off.

I was standing there with my eyes closed. And then I kind of opened my eyes. And he got up on the stage by this point and had got his microphone in his hand. And I thought, oh, he's going to do a lovely appeal and we can all respond. And he just sort of motioned for me to come up on the stage. And I was just like, what is he doing? So I followed, get up on the stage. I mean, I've been camping. I'm in my, I'm not looking the most glamorous I've ever looked. And then I'm up on the stage.

[16:56] And I thought, he's going to ask me a couple of questions or interview me. And he just sort of handed me the microphone. At which point I shared what I just shared with you now. And God, all I can say is that God used my testimony and my rawness.

I just sobbed on the stage and sort of to 7,000, 8,000 people shared where I was at. And just said to everybody, if I feel like this, I know that other people do.

And something supernatural happened in that tent. There were thousands who responded. It took me, I think, nearly an hour to get from the tent afterwards back to my tent.

Because I had one person after the other, after the other, after the other, wanting to come and share their story. And tell me about what was going on in their lives. And how broken they were and traumatized they were.

And God just used that moment. And then, and I can't say that I felt massively different.

[18:02] But I knew that God had done something powerful in that moment. And then I found myself at the Orchard Conference in October. And I knew I felt different because I came to that conference going to God.

I'm here. I don't quite know, you know, how I feel about things. But I'm listening. I'm listening. And I was attentive. And something had woken up.

And that's when God, there was a testimony shared about the women's ministry. About a lady that had gone to Orchard the previous year. And had gone home and gathered the women. And I could just hear God saying, it's time to gather the women again, Helen.

And I was literally like, I literally am not listening. I know I said I'm listening, but I'm not listening. And I knew God was saying, it's time.

It's time to get back on the pitch, as it were to me. And I, my natural instinct is to want to be useful. Is to want to be productive.

[19:05] Is to want to feel like I'm making a difference. And on the one hand, I genuinely was feeling like I'd quite like to have a quiet life.

And paint. And help people with their interior design. And not actually step back in. But I knew that God was speaking to me.

But here's the things that went through my mind. And I really felt like, for some of you in the room, this is going to be how you feel. I'm not suitable.

I don't have the right qualifications. I'm not spiritual enough. My body is a total mess. I literally can't read and concentrate. I can't remember anything. I don't have enough energy.

What if the cancer returns? What if it's all a big disappointment? And it immediately became about me. And it has been a battle, literally, from that first day of hearing of, can I, can't I?

[20:07] Does anybody relate to that? When they've had that nudge and they've had that, I'm speaking to you. So it's just, it's literally blind panic. Of, I know what God is saying, but I'm not sure.

I'm ready for this. And understandably, it had been a hard season. So then we get to Easter this year. And I have, we go self-catering in the summer.

And my deal with Alex and Isabel this year was we're going to have a treat at Easter. And we planned this trip to drive from here to Tuscany. And I don't know whether any of you have ever had a yearning to go somewhere.

Has anybody ever had a real yearning to go somewhere for no apparent reason? And I can't tell you why I've always wanted to go to Tuscany. There's a lot of countries that I'm not really bothered about. But Tuscany, for some reason, has always been this thing.

And I said to Alex and Isabel, I want to drive to Tuscany. So we did this two and a half thousand mile drive there. And it was amazing. It was a trip I'd always wanted to do. And it was expensive.

[ 21 : 09 ] And I was just like, this is going to be a big treat. And as we were planning it, I had this absolute awakening that it was our 25th wedding anniversary. And I just thought, that's amazing.

In 2020, you know, five years ago was pretty bleak. We lost our treat. So let's do it. It felt like a justification. And we needed to celebrate for obvious reasons.

And I, you know, when you've had a cancer diagnosis, obviously it is so hard. And, you know, you are, yeah, I've been living with that sense of, I don't know how long I've got left.

I don't know. Time might be ticking. Who knows? I want to make the most of this and actually go and celebrate and be thankful. And as we were going, I felt God just nudge me.

And this is important again. That nudge. You know, I'm down at the front at wildfires without even knowing why. I'm listening. I'm saying to God at Orchard, I'm listening.

[ 22 : 10 ] Lord, speak to me. And then we're planning to go on this holiday. And I'm thinking, I'm going to have a rest. I'm going to have a space. I'm not going to be busy because we're not going to be self-catering. Shall I take the pains? No. God said, I want you to take a book.

I was just like, what? I can't even, I can't read. I can't concentrate. I can't remember anything. I read two pages and then literally forget it. So I have to keep going back to the same page. I think it's part of the menopause.

But I got this nudge. And somebody bought me this book three years ago. And it is by a lady called Beth Moore. Anybody heard of Beth Moore?

Chasing Vines. And she bought it me three years ago. There's not a chance that I can even begin to tell you or cover a fraction of this book.

So I've put it up there. Because if anybody is interested in looking at this passage, learning about this passage, letting God speak to you through it more deeply than tonight, please get it.

[ 23 : 11 ] Honestly, it's wonderful. And I thought, oh, that's great. We're going to Tuscany. She's standing on a vineyard. It's all about vineyards. We're going to Tuscany.

That's obviously why God wants me to take it. And the second week we were there, I'm sitting there. And by the pool, it was utterly stunning.

The picture on there is the view from my kitchen window where we were staying. It doesn't even begin to do it justice. Catherine's seen the real one, haven't you, Catherine? It is beautiful. But that was the view from the window.

So I'm sitting on this vineyard out by the pool. It was this wonderful time. And interestingly, it makes me kind of chuckle because I'm thinking, here I am.

I'm back. God's spoken to me. And honestly, what went through my mind was, oh, this is going to be good. It's all about how to be productive and fruitful. And that's what I need to do.

[ 24 : 13 ] I need to know what God is saying to me about being productive and fruitful. And as I'm reading it, and it is stunning. I was literally hooked.

I had this moment where, you know, when you're kind of, you're reading something and it's all based on John 15, this passage, the entire book. It's just mind-blowing, her ability to unpack the scriptures and show the way that God has weaved right through from Genesis to Revelation, the story and the analogies and the pictures of the vineyard and the gardener.

It was just, it was beautiful. And I was able to read it and concentrate. But then I'm sitting there on that second day, devouring this book, literally living, sitting on this vineyard and seeing it all come to life.

And then I just have this moment where God suddenly breaks in. And I realize why that book, that moment, that time. Because 25 years ago, when Alex and I got married, this was the passage that we chose for our wedding.

And I know it sounds ridiculous, but I was just like, I'd completely forgotten. It was a long time ago. It was literally just not even in my thinking that we're celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary.

[ 25 : 35 ] Sitting in a vineyard that I had planned, that had been in my heart and yearning for. Five years ago, we were hearing that I had cancer.

And literally, they said to me, if you're here in five years' time, you're going to be doing really well.

And anything after that is a bonus. And 25 years after, I'm sitting on a vineyard, reading this book about John 15, thinking 25 years ago, that's the passage that we chose.

And this is what I felt God say to me in that moment. I am intimately involved in every single aspect of your life.

From the beginning to the end. I'm involved in all of the detail. But the problem is, you've got to step in. And you've got to connect to me.

And you've got to allow me to be in the detail. And the only thing, honestly, that was between that moment, that beautiful moment of revelation, love and care from God, was that I asked God, what shall I take on holiday?

[ 26 : 48 ] That was it. I mean, honestly, it was no more complicated than that. I just gave him a minute. Shall I take my paints or shall I take a book? And I've got this moment where God is saying, okay.

So then I'm like, I get that you're doing that for me, Lord Jesus, and that is so beautiful. But, you know, why this book and why now? And here I am listening to you about the women. And then I just thought, John 15, I'm just thinking about this passage and reading it and listening to Beth talking about it.

And I just had this moment where I thought, oh my goodness, like 25 years, probably more than that, probably my whole Christian life, I've literally missed the point of the passage completely.

From the moment that I read it, probably. I've completely missed it. So this is my interpretation. And I'm really wondering, can you put the passage back up, Terry?

Just have a think about it for a second. When you heard that passage read to you, just be honest with yourself. I'm not going to ask anybody to put their hand up. Who reads, follow the instructions, you'll be successful, I'll be pleased with you, and you won't be in trouble and get burnt up and chopped on the fire.

[ 28 : 08 ] Maybe it's just me. Maybe it's my experience of growing up. But it's basically like school reports. Okay, she's not very good.

She doesn't concentrate. She doesn't listen enough. And if she did, she'd be so much more fruitful and beneficial. And then, you know, honestly, that was basically my school report. So I have read this passage pretty much missing the whole rest of it.

Follow the instructions. You know, follow my commands. Listen to me. Do what I'm asking you to. And then you'll bear much fruit. And I'm going to be very pleased with you. So it's basically an exam to pass or fail.

And then I just, I'm like, okay, it's not about that at all. This is the greatest love story you're ever going to read. And in the looking into it and reading and Beth explaining it and seeing what's before and seeing what comes after.

In John 14, 16. This is the moment where Jesus is sitting with his disciples. It's Passover.

[ 29 : 20 ] He's about to go to the cross. They've spent every waking hour together. They've seen miracle after miracle. They know Jesus intimately, but they have no idea what is ahead.

They don't know what's coming, really. And it is going to be tough. Really tough. Obviously, we know what's ahead for them.

And he uses this beautiful picture of this vineyard. Because they would have been familiar with that. They would have been immersed in that scenery. He's telling them in this beautiful way.

Listen, we're in a battle of life or death. And it's going to get really tough.

And I'm giving you the strategy to survive. And here's the plan. I'm giving you the map, basically, which was going to give you strength and confidence to get through.

[ 30 : 23 ] And then I was just blown away by the next bit. You need to stick together. If you're about to go into battle, on the battlefield, you need to be together.

You need to know the battle plan. You need to know what you need to do. And he says in verse 12, you need to love each other the way that I have loved you. You need to have each other's backs.

And then this is basically what he's saying. The battle is going to be won with love. My love for the Father. His love for me.

My love for you. This relationship. Interconnected relationship. And he's asking me to show my love for you by giving my life for you.

And we're going to win. I've loved you the way the Father loves me.

[ 31 : 27 ] He's saying it to the disciples. You know, they're there. I've loved you and I'm about to die for you. And then this blows my mind. And guess what? I've chosen you. I've selected you to be in the battle.

To then tell the world about me. I mean, these guys. This is the future of the cross. The gospel is in their hands. It's going to be up to them. I'm going to give you everything that you need.

I'm going to give you the Holy Spirit who's going to be with you when I'm not here. It's going to be brutal. And here's the thing. You've got to stick with me.

You've got to stay connected with me. You've got to be literally glued to me. This beautiful image of the vine. If you want to win with me.

If you want to stay safe. If you want to know that you're going to get through this. You need to know who I am. And I've chosen you to be in this. It's not an accident. And here's the thing.

[ 32 : 35 ] The fruitfulness is inevitable. It's a given. It's not the main thing.

Literally missed the point completely. I have. I don't have time to share it all now. But I probably will tell another time. But I felt God reminds me that when I was in my early 20s.

I was literally at a crossroads. I could have gone one way or the other. I could have made the decision to stay away from God. To stay away from my church community that I'd been dipping in and out of.

Staying in the relationship that I knew wasn't from God. And I had a massive decision to make about leaving a job that was not blessing me at all. And not doing me any good.

And I came to God in desperation. And asked him for wisdom. I'd been offered a role for a charity that was a voluntary charity. Giving up my job, my salary, the whole works.

[ 33 : 41 ] And I went to the loo. I sat down. I had my Bible in my bag. And I said, God, I need you to speak to me. Please, Lord. And I opened my Bible. And there was a passage literally on that page I'd never read before.

And it was all I needed to know. God is saying leave. Do you know, that was 30 years ago. And the fruit of that decision is me standing here today. One of the fruits.

Because at that charity I met Lucy. Who's Kate's sister. Is she here still? Lucy. Okay. Just came for the cake.

Outrageous. She, I made friendships with her there. And then ended up meeting the whole family. And then ended up down the line moving to Clevedon. And coming to Christchurch.

30 years ago. I met Alex through that job. Through that change. And I was just like, the fruit is inevitable.

[ 34 : 38 ] Our job. This is what I summed up.

What some came to in the bit that I was looking at. And just looking at for tonight. The greatest commandment. The disciples asked him, what's the greatest commandment?

Love the Lord your God with all your mind. Your body. Your soul. Whatever the circumstances. Know the truth of his love. Choose to believe it.

Stay connected in. And if whatever you're doing. Wherever you are. Wherever you find yourself. In roles. In relationships. In. If it's motivated by love.

If you've got that sense of God. In those choices. If he is your focus. And stays your first love. Then whatever you're doing.

[ 35 : 32 ] Is going to produce fruit. That's just mind blowing to me. So if it's that simple. Why is it so hard?

I just want you to imagine for a second. Going back to the questions I asked you earlier. What would it have taken. For those relationships. Not to be the relationships that you had.

You said what you needed to do. To keep them alive. Or what you want. What you would have naturally done. But what would it have taken. For them not to thrive. And I think this is going to be something.

That we're just going to have to. Take away and ponder on. But here's the thing I wrote down. This is me. This is for me. Because I'm like. I'm reading this. I was jumping up and down.

With excitement and joy and light. Oh my goodness God. It is literally all about. Just you. Just staying in love with you. Staying focused. You have proven yourself. Time and time and time again to me.

[ 36 : 32 ] In the best times. And in the darkest times. I don't understand it all. Some of it was hideous. I have lost beautiful friends. That you know.

Have battled. And are not here anymore. There are so many questions. But for me. I can absolutely say. God has been faithful. So why do I not stay connected in. And I am going to wind this up in a second.

But this is really important. How many of you. Are more worried. Including myself. About being connected to the Wi-Fi. Than you are about being connected to Jesus.

Who arrives anywhere. And the first thing they do. Is literally give me that Wi-Fi code. I mean it's literally like an obsession. Imagine if you weren't connected.

Right now on your phones. Or at home. We're so reliant on them aren't we. And I as I was writing. I literally felt like a thunderbolt hit me. Like God saying.

[ 37 : 33 ] You are more interested in your Wi-Fi connection. Than you are staying connected to me. Maybe that's a challenge for somebody else. So quickly. We have to spend time.

We have to prioritise time. We have to invest in the relationship. Any of those relationships. That you've written down on those cards. If you do not invest time in them. If you hadn't invested time in them.

They would not have been the relationship. That they were. Or that they are. End of story. So what are the distractions? Ask God.

To reveal what they are. We're going to spend a bit of time in a minute. Just listening to. A beautiful track. We can join in with it. We can just listen. I'm going to pray that God speaks to you.

What are the distractions? The second reason that we don't stay connected. Is the desire. So what or who else.

[ 38 : 33 ] Is filling that space. And here's a list. Apathy. Disbelief. We don't believe it.

We don't believe it. Sometimes. We literally find it so hard to believe. That God chose you. And he loves you. He chose me. And he loves me. It's just this disbelief. Disappointment.

Disillusionment. Shame. Consumed with other things. And I really believe.

You know. That story of wildfires last year. I shared it because. I was literally. Brutally honest with God. I was like. I am not happy. I'm angry.

And God can cope with our anger. And our. Grumpiness. And our honesty. Just wants us to bring it to him. To reconnect. Connect. And then knowledge.

[ 39 : 32 ] We know that we're in a battle. And he's given us a strategy. I mean. I don't know about you. But I just read the news. And listen to the news. And I'm terrified. A lot of the time.

I'm just overwhelmed. Like. What on earth is happening? I've got a 14 year old. What's going to happen? God knew. He said to the disciples. Listen. It is going to get.

Brutal. If we think it isn't going to get brutal. Ladies. I think we're deceived. It is. It already is. In some ways. But God has given us a strategy. We need to know our enemy.

And we need to take notice. And the enemy is like this. My enemy is. Shut up. You haven't got anything to say. You're going through the menopause. You're useless.

You literally don't look like you're used to anymore. Who are you to say anything? That is my enemy. What are the lies? That you are listening to.

[ 40 : 36 ] And then I just wanted to say. One more thing. To stay connected. You need to make. It. Happen. Literally just need to make it happen.

And my pathetic attempt to. Lord. What do you want me to take on holiday? I just asked him the question. I think. In our minds. We think it's literally.

We've got to give him all day. It's not practical. Or feasible. Is it? Every single one of you. In the room. Is literally juggling. About ten balls. Probably in the air.

At any given time. Whether you're a teenager. Whether you're the oldest lady. In the room. We are all busy. Doing a lot. Being connected. To wifi. Make it happen.

And here's the thing. I felt God say. It's not one size fits all. I'm not expecting you all. To be bible scholars. Or you know. Paint. To worship me. Or have beautiful voices.

[ 41 : 32 ] And be. Leading worship. Every single one of us. Has been created. Individually. Beautifully. And we can connect with him. In the way that he has created. Us to connect.

So through creativity. In stillness. My worst nightmare. In the natural world. Investing in time. And it's like. Three minutes. We give God. And he responds like that. I can absolutely guarantee. If you give God the space. He will show up. Seek him.

With all of your heart. And then. The beautiful one. Is in community. And I just.

It just sort of like. Dawned on me. Even on Friday. When I was finally writing this. Sitting over the suspense. Looking over the suspension bridge. Crying out to him. Lord. Please help me to bring this together.

[ 42 : 26 ] I was just like. Oh. It was like a light bulb went on. God was saying. Jesus was saying to the disciples. That. Is it the final bit. Where it says. You know. Love one another.

Can you imagine. Any of those disciples. Going off on their own. To try and. Get through it. And. Start sharing the gospel. Out of his love. He.

Chose us. But we've got. Literally. Got to do it together. And then it just dawned on me. This is why this is important. This is why. That prophetic word. That I really felt.

God gave me. At the beginning. Was more important. Than anything. That I share tonight. We have to do it together. And what COVID did. Was it brought us all apart.

You know. It made islands. And it just sort of. We all. And then I think we all. We've all started coming back together. I genuinely can tell you. I would not be standing here. And in the room now. With you.

[ 43 : 22 ] If it hadn't been for. Some of the ladies. In the room right now. Who have gathered with me. And prayed. And been with me. Through those really. Really difficult times. In the last few years. Who have literally held me up.

And encouraged me. And championed me. We need each other. And we need to be doing it.

Differently to the world. That's why the comparison. And the comparing.

And the. You know. The challenge. You know. Just not being kind to one another. It's not okay.

Judging each other. We need to be. Each other's cheerleaders. So being in community.

So make him a priority. Figure out why that desire. Is not there. Remember where we are. And who we're fighting.

The battle that we're in. And make the time. Just love to give us. An opportunity to respond.

[ 44 : 20 ] In prayer. I felt. When I was praying. Earlier on. That. There's definitely. People in the room.

That are like. I don't know whether I've ever. Felt like. God's chased after me. That I've been chosen. I know I. Struggle with it. So much as well. I think we all do.

Because actually. I think the enemy. Wants to make sure. That we don't. Feel that. Love. But here's the thing. One of the talks.

That I was listening to. About this passage. If you're sitting here. Tonight. God is chasing after you. Because you're here.

And somebody's invited you. Or you felt that nudge. Or God's pursuing you. Whether you like it or not. And I just.

[ 45 : 15 ] I know it will have touched. Us in different ways. This evening. So I just wanted to. Give everybody an opportunity. To respond. And for me to pray.

And then we're just going to get. Kate and Beth back. To do a final song. It doesn't matter. What it was. That's touched you. Maybe you feel challenged. Maybe you feel encouraged. Maybe you feel like. I literally don't know.

What she's talking about. And I really want to know. What she's talking about. I want to know. This Jesus. I want to know. That he loves me. I want to know. That he died for me. You might be in.

Absolute darkness.

And desperation. Like I was. A couple of years ago. Sitting there. Feeling. Absolutely numb. Or angry. Or disappointed. And that's okay. God's really big enough.

For all of that. But I know. That God's on our case. Ladies. Whether we like it or not. He is. And he needs us. To lean in. For one another.

[ 46 : 12 ] For ourselves. For this town. For the nation. He needs us. To lean in. So let's just pray. If you. If you. Want to just respond. And receive from God. For whatever it is. Let's just hold our hands out.

Quietly. Where you are. Lord Jesus. We. We are so grateful. That you came. And you died. That you gave. Your life. You are the true vine.

You are the way. The truth. The life. There is never. Going to be a time. That if we take the time. To connect into you.

To turn our face. Towards you. To be connected. Into that vine. That you are not. Going to. Meet with us. Speak to us. Encourage us.

Be close to us. In the pain. And you have said. It is going to get tough. There will be things. There will be. Dark times. But everything you need.

[ 47 : 15 ] Is in me. And so God. For every single person. In the room tonight. Every single one. Of these beautiful women. I pray Lord Jesus. That you will speak.

Into their hearts. In whatever way. You want to do that Lord. May none of them. Leave this room tonight. Not knowing. That you love them.

That you have chosen them. They are not an accident. They are not here by accident. And that you are enough for them Lord. Your perfect love. Is enough.

Thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus. And help us Lord. Help us to tune in. Help us to listen. Help us to give you time.

Help us to believe. What you are saying. Help us to. Notice. The battles that are going on. That we have to fight. With your help. Every time we look at our phone.

[ 48 : 15 ] Or check the wifi. I pray Lord. That you will remind us. That you first. And the fruit will follow. Thank you Jesus.

Yes. Thank you.