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Duets

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Duets

I learned at an early age when listening to recorded music, that sometimes two persons would sing together at the same time, or they might sing to each other. I noticed that often the two were a couple, but sometimes the interaction was between antagonists. Whether we sing in the shower, sing in church, or never sing, we often have interactions with one other person.

Sometimes we are in harmony as we relate with an individual, sometimes not. Some duets are more in our desires than in reality. Although we are aware that we have mental, physical, and spiritual differences with all other persons, we would like to interact with some as do singers when one carries the melody, and the other a different part, or both sing the same music together. But we can only offer to cooperate in a harmonious fashion with someone else. Even if we are willing to make every effort to complement, add to, or otherwise accompany another person, we cannot make another person cooperate with us.

Perhaps we do not have the voice, preferences, words or talents that will satisfy another person so that he or she would be willing to engage with us in a balanced manner. But more often, others have motives of their own that are unrelated to any qualifications we might or might not have. We can focus on our disappointment, and we can come up with all kinds of reasons why the other person should choose to respond as we wish, but we always have the more helpful option of accepting the real consequences of human freedom, which allows us to be at peace, without the other person's cooperation. Not even God forces anyone to join in a duet.

However, we can be absolutely sure that God is available to us and very desirous of creating a duet with us if we are willing. Even some of our frustrations or failures with others are opportunities for relating directly and personally with God. Whether we start out by complaining at the intransigence of another person, or expressing our hopes and concerns about someone else, we do not have to prove ourselves or otherwise try to convince God that we are ready to harmonize. With God, there are no prerequisites other than the essentials for all duets: besides singing our part, we must listen to the other!

No matter what we bring to a one-to-one session with God, we cannot give a solo performance and expect to come away with any satisfaction. Whether our expressions are of pain or sorrow, joy or

delight, we will not experience fulfillment until we turn the ears of our hearts to the unique harmony that God makes with us.

If we have difficulty distinguishing God's voice from our own, it is at least partly because God so graciously aligns with all the distinctive ways each of us communicates our thoughts and feelings. Rather than hearing words or receiving thoughts as from a distant "other," the movements within us that are inspired by God are recognized by their effects: harmony, concord, and peace.

Duets: we can "sing" with God at any time and place, because our Partner loves to harmonize with us, and will do so, whenever we open our hearts.