



## DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

March 13, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

# BETTER TOGETHER

*Two are better than one . . . If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

### READ Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Søren Solkær spent years photographing starlings and their breathtaking spectacle: murmurations, where hundreds of thousands of starlings move in fluid motion across the sky. Watching this marvel is like sitting underneath an orchestrated, swirling wave or a massive, dark brushstroke flowing into a kaleidoscope of patterns. In Denmark, they call this starling experience Black Sun (also the title of Solkær's stunning book of photographs). Most remarkable is how starlings instinctively follow their nearest companion, flying so close that if one were to miss a beat, they'd suffer mass calamity. However, starlings use murmurations to protect one another. When a hawk descends, these tiny creatures enter tight formation and move collectively, beating back a predator who'd easily pick them off if they were alone.

We're better together than we are alone. "Two are better than one," Ecclesiastes says. "If either . . . falls down, one can help the other up. [And] if two lie down together, they will keep warm" (4:9–11). Alone, we're isolated and easy prey. We're exposed without the comfort or protection of others.

But with companions, we give and receive help. "Though one may be overpowered," Ecclesiastes says, "two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (v. 12). We're better together as God leads us.

By **Winn Collier**

### PRAY & REFLECT

**Dear God, please help me commit to being in community and extending Your love. Amen**

How are you more vulnerable when you're isolated from others? How can you draw closer to them?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Although the author of Ecclesiastes isn't named, he refers to himself as "the Teacher," or *qoheleth* in Hebrew (1:1-2, 12; 12:8-10). Based on internal evidence, scholars believe that "the Teacher" is Solomon, "son of David" (1:1) and "king over Israel in Jerusalem" (v. 12). In the first six chapters, Solomon examines life as he'd lived it and discusses what makes it purposeful and meaningful. He talks about human achievements, pleasures, and wisdom (chs. 1-2) and how mortal men live out their time on earth in the light of eternity (ch. 3). In chapter 4, Solomon discusses social relationships. The solitary person lives a miserable, lonely existence without social interactions with other humans. In verses 9-12, the author extols the value, advantages, and mutual benefits of friendship, partnership, and companionship, making this passage a popular text for weddings. Solomon argues that friendships and community are needed for a meaningful life. – By **K. T. Sim**

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