

Share the Soil, Celebrate the Growth

Pastor John Hicks

First United Methodist Church

Kathy and I love gardening. Actually, I just like to watch things grow. Kathy is the true horticulturalist. (That means that she grows things well!) I plant peppers and tomatoes and onions and even a stalk of sugar cane. Kathy plants flowers and grows orchids and does landscaping. In our yard are planted two rose bushes that are about the same age. This last year, however, I have noticed a noticeable difference between the two. They are both healthy bushes, but one is flowering like crazy and the other is hardly blooming at all.

It took me a little while to realize why. Earlier this year, Kathy wanted to plant some perennials and annuals in an area that surrounded one of the rose bushes. We brought in some black dirt to fill this area, and I buried an offering of the cleanings from a successful fishing trip. We planted the new plants, and of course watered them regularly to help them root properly. The attention and effort that we directed toward the new plantings, combined with the extra soil and fertilizer, created a growing environment that far exceeded what we had offered our solo rose bush. Total autonomy had been replaced by companionship and an added depth that promoted growth at an accelerated rate.

There are times when growing alone and being fully autonomous sounds appealing. But independence isn't always what it's cracked up to be. The truth is, when we are planted next to others, we feed on each other and accelerated growth results.

Apply this thought to those in your life and see what happens. Take time each week to spend some special time with your children and watch the growth as you share soil together. Take some quiet time away with just your spouse or a special friend and share some common ground. Plant yourself in a Bible study and enjoy the blessing of shared nourishment. Grow in the rich fellowship of a church family. Haul in some black dirt, buy some perennials, and stop trying to go it alone. July and August can be terribly dry and hot.