

## Think before you reply

I was reading Facebook recently and there was a post that was rather innocuous, and I was reading the comments. One that stood out stated that a previous person's comments had been stupid, and she must be an idiot and that this was why old people should not have social media. I looked to see what could have possibly set off this irate obviously young person but could not find the comment. It had either been deleted or was so far away I could not reach it. I was so offended by this I typed in a very nasty, very cutting, very verbose reply. I pointed out the faults of the younger generation, the idiocy of her remarks, told her I hoped she outgrew her 14 year old angst and mentioned her complete failure to value people whatever their age and anything else I could think of including the fact that she would, if lucky, one day be old. As I looked at my reply I realized that she would indeed someday be in the same boat as the aged, would not have her opinion valued, would be ignored while standing at the bakery counter, insulted in the car dealership and sometimes treated like a second class citizen. Though still somewhat steamed, I deleted my reply. I decided to let God take care of it and said a prayer for this lost soul. I thought of all the times I should have deleted my words and had felt guilt after writing them, or the times when I just could not keep my mouth closed and gave a biting reply. I worked with a nurse some years ago that would get upset with other nurses and their habits, this ranged from taking a break to smoke to not setting up the unit correctly (to her satisfaction) to talking too much and anything else that bothered her that day. At the end of the diatribe she would then offer up that she was going to pray for the nurse. I noticed that these nurses she was praying for would often leave for another job. One day I told her that I had noticed this and asked that when I irritated her would she please not pray for me because I rather liked the job. But I do believe in praying for others for their release from their anger and hurt and my prayer is for my understanding and acceptance because I know I cannot change others but I can change my response to them.

Proverbs 17:28 Even Fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Lord, we are sometimes an angry people, quick to condemn others and slow to forgive. Be with us, may we become more Christ-like in word and deed. Be with those who are grieving, those who are ill, those who face decisions that are life-changing, those who are alone and isolated. Be with our Pastor and his family, bless his ministry, be with our staff and leaders may they feel your presence and help, be with our country may we be united. Bless our church, may we be the hands and feet of Christ. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson