



## Thai Social Obligations



Remember Obligation is not a bad word.

Last night we had dinner with Manuel B. He has been serving the Kingdom in Phitsanulok for 10 years.

Thai people are viewed as very friendly, and they are, but entering their social circles is very tough. You feel like an outsider most of the time. Manuel asked me, "Why are Thai social circle so closed?"

Here's Why:

Last week Somboon's sister in-law died. We do not personally know her, but we know and are very close to Somboon. So, Thursday, Friday

and Today we were at the funeral services. Pictured is her coffin.

Yesterday Gate's sister passed away after a long illness. We do not know her. I feel like we do because we have so closely followed the events. But Tuu, Gate's husband came over to tell me of her passing. We will attend that funeral Tuesday.

And Jay Muay, the woman I spoke of in my last letter passed this morning. I was on the phone with her brother Jerund talking about her, about the family, and about the Kingdom for an hour this morning. That funeral will be in Bangkok.

We are in several intimate communities, and it means a significant commitment, but a deep and very real intimacy. We are obligated, but we are also lovingly happy to support our friends in hard times. This is why social circles are difficult to enter. It means more commitments.

Awn put it well today. Funerals are often on a weekday, inconvenient for those employed. But Awn said, "Foreigners excuse themselves from the funeral because they have to work, and everyone understands. Thais excuse themselves from work because of a funeral, and everyone understands."

Pray for Manuel to enter into deep, committed relationship with the Thai people in his life. Pray that God strengthen and sustain us.

Pray for the friends and family of Jay Muay as she was healthy and would have lived much longer if not for her fall down the stairs.

Loving Our Neighbors.