

What It Means to Be a Friend

Here at Victory, we are in the month of “Fellowship” which is a part of our 5-fold vision as a church. In 2024 we committed to “Run with the Vision”. Each month we have been teaching different aspects of this vision and have seen the evidence of spiritual maturity and growth within our church community.

A life of: Prayer *** Teaching *** Worship *** Evangelism *** Fellowship

This is our month of Fellowship where we are strengthening our relationships and friendships. Before we get into how to be a good friend, let’s quickly talk about how to make friends. This is largely taken from Dale Carnegie’s timeless book “How To Win Friends and Influence People”.

Six Ways to Make People Like You

1. Become genuinely interested in other people (**Prov 17:17** - "A friend is always loyal...")
2. Smile (**Prov 15:13** - "A glad heart makes a happy face...")
3. Remember that a person's name is, to that person, the sweetest sound in any language. (**Isa 43:1** "I have called you by name; you are mine.")
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves (**James 1:19** "You must all be quick to listen...")
5. Talk in terms of the other person's interests. (**1 Cor 9:22** "I try to find common ground with everyone...")
6. Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely (**Rom 12:10** "Love each other with genuine affection...")

I encourage everyone to read that book and to use it to help you and your children navigate relationships and friendships.

What it means to be a friend

1. A True Friend Is Committed

Prov 18:24 (ESV) *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

Ruth 1:16-17 (ESV) *But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.'*

Ruth's commitment to Naomi illustrates the depth of true friendship, highlighting the willingness to stand by loved ones in times of need.

Prov 27:10 (ESV) *Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.*

This verse emphasizes the importance of being present and committed to friends, especially during difficult times.

David and Jonathan's friendship. Their bond exemplifies loyalty and commitment, even in the face of danger.

(1 Sam 18:1-4)

2. A Friend Offers Support

Ecc 4:9-10 (NLT) *Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.*

Gal 6:2 (ESV) *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

This verse calls us to support each other in our struggles, fulfilling Christ's command to love and care for one another.

1 Thess 5:11 (ESV) *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

Encouragement is a vital aspect of friendship, and we are called to uplift each other in faith.

The story of Job's friends. Their presence during Job's suffering illustrates the importance of being there for one another, even when words fail. (**Job 2:11-13**)

3. A Friend Speaks the Truth

Prov 27:6 (ESV) *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.*

Eph 4:15 (ESV) *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.*

This verse emphasizes the importance of honesty in relationships, advocating for truth to be shared with love.

Prov 28:23 (ESV) *Whoever rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue.*

This verse contrasts the value of honest feedback with the dangers of flattery, reinforcing the idea that true friends prioritize honesty.

Nathan confronting David (**2 Sam 12:1-7**). Nathan's courage to speak truthfully to David about his sin demonstrates the importance of confronting friends with love and honesty.

4. We Are Friends of God

John 15:15 (ESV) *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

James 2:23 (ESV) *And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness'—and he was called a friend of God.*

Abraham's faith established a close relationship with God, demonstrating that belief and obedience open the door to friendship with Him.

1 John 3:1 (ESV) *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*

This verse emphasizes the familial aspect of our relationship with God, highlighting His love and the honor of being called His children.

Rom 5:10 (NLT) *For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.*

This highlights the grace that restores our relationship with God, transforming us from enemies into friends through Christ's sacrifice.

Matt 11:29 (ESV) *Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Jesus invites us to learn from Him, showing His willingness to share His life and heart with us, which is the essence of true friendship.

Example of Jesus' Friendship with His Disciples:

- **The Last Supper (John 13:1-15)**
- **In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46)**
- **Restoration of Peter (John 21:15-17)**

Conclusion: I found it interesting that a friend of mine, Nathaniel Bassey posted this on his Instagram 3 days ago on this very topic.

This is the caption: “- BE THAT FRIEND - Be that Friend a Friend can trust. Be that Friend with lots of love. Stand in adversity. Rejoice in Festivity. Strive for tranquility and Shun hostility. Speak the truth in love even if it hurts. Cheer to every win and comfort in any loss. Be an encourager; a son of consolation. Be an anchor and not a handcuff. Be true, Be good, Be real, Be You. BE AUTHENTIC.

Say in their face, what you'd at their back. Be that friend that will not sting. But more importantly, Be the one who will not blink to do what's right, regardless.

Be that friend a friend can run to. Be that friend a friend can stick to. Be that friend a friend can cry to. Be that friend a friend that laugh with. Be that friend a friend can pray with. Be that friend a friend can play with. But remember, the one you call a Friend, must Himself or Herself be Friendly. If not, you may have a Fan but not a Friend. Be a Friend, indeed, today. And may God grant you true Friends. For times of war and those of joy. Shalom.”

Let us strive to be the kind of friends Jesus was—loyal, supportive, honest, and loving—so that our friendships mirror the beautiful relationship we have with Him.