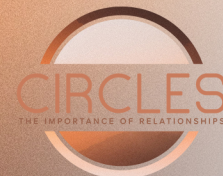


FINDING TRUE FRIENDSHIP



PRECEPT

PROVERBS 13:20

²⁰ Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

PROVERBS 18:24

²⁴ There are "friends" who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

PROMISE

Andy Stanley tells us, "*Our friend determines the direction and quality of our lives.*" This is true whether we like it or not. This is also why it's important to choose our friends wisely. There are those friends who can lead us astray, pressuring us to do what they want us to do and resulting into bad consequences for not everyone around us has our best interest in mind. Friends do influence us in so many ways, even our self-esteem is affected by our friends. They can be the reason for our happiness or depression. This is why the Bible commands us in Proverbs 13:20, "*Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.*"

The four levels of friendship are as follows:

Level 1: **Contacts** - acquaintances, colleagues, companions.

Level 2: **Casual Friends** - very limited influence, meets occasionally, during seasons.

Level 3: **Close Friends** - more time spent together, increase of influence since there are commonalities such as likes/dislikes, skills, hobbies, etc.

Level 4: **Core Friends** - best friends, very few - more time spent together, high influence on each other, common life principles, life foundations, beliefs, view of life.

Jesus modelled to us these levels of friendship. He loved everyone, fed thousands, trained 120 people, discipled 12 people, and mentored 3 of His friends namely Peter, James, and John. Jesus was intentional about calling these three to His side. They left their nets and followed Him. Jesus specifically brings only those three along with Him to Jarius' house, where He raised his daughter from the dead. Mark 5:37 says, "*He allowed no one to go with Him but Peter and James and John.*" They were also taken up the mountain for the miraculous transfiguration of Jesus. "*Jesus took with Him Peter and James and his brother John.*" (Mark 9:1-13)

FIND TRUE FRIENDSHIP: PRAY AND PLAY

Jesus showed us how He acquired friends; He prayed for His disciples when He fasted for 40 days. This is what we are ought to do, pray for people before choosing them to be our friends. Then He spent time with them; doing ministry and walked everyday with them. We are to spend time with our friends and do life together; whether it be doing hobbies, hanging out with them, etc. Proverbs 17:17 says, "*A friend is there to help, in any situation.*" A true friend should encourage us to grow. They must challenge us to grow and grow with us; give meaningful talks and ask thought-provoking questions, help us celebrate achievements, and be there for us in times of troubles. A true friend is also one that supports us all the time. Loyal and standing by our side through thick and thin, for better or for worse, at all costs. Praise God that He showed this example to us. He called us His friends and is always loving, caring, and nurturing to us. For this reason, we can show this same love to our friends and be the godly friend to others for His glory.

PRACTICE

1. Selecting Friends. What does the Bible say about selecting friends? How can you be wise in selecting friends or people in your circle?

2. Being a True Friend. How can you be a true friend to others? Is there someone in your life that God is calling you to be a friend to?

PRAYER

I. Leaders

- Pray that God will strengthen our pastors and leaders to lead His people in God's Word.

II. Church

- Pray that we will be faithful to do our mission in spreading God's love and truth.

III. Discipleship

- Pray that each individual and family will commit to discipleship in their homes.

IV. Members

- Pray that we will all be disciplined in reading and obeying God's Word at all costs.

V. Families

- Pray that all families will be centred in Christ; loving, serving, and caring for one another.

VI. Life Groups

- Pray that more members will be part of small groups and we will be united in love for each other and for God.

VII. Worship Services

- Pray that our services will be a blessing to all and glorifying to God at all times.