

## PRAYER



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Almighty Father, I give thanks today for the friendships in my life. Lord, this life isn't meant to be lived alone, so I am grateful for the people who walk alongside me, supporting me, loving me, and encouraging me. For we cannot do it all alone, but are better together. Help me to be more aware and gracious to my friends, appreciating them and accepting their help. Help me to be a better friend, too, supporting, loving, and encouraging others. Lord, lead me to find and cultivate deeper friendships and be a good friend in all that I do. Shower your blessings upon those I call friends, that you may ever be in our midst. Bind us together, Lord, for a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Amen.

[\*Katherine Shirey, Prayer + Possibilities\*](#)

## WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

What qualities do you look for in a friend?

## NOTES



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## WORD

<sup>12</sup> *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

### [JOHN 15:12-17](#)

In this passage, we learn five important truths about friendship with Jesus.

- First, friendship with Jesus is conditional. "You are my friends if..." Friendship is not automatic. It doesn't come as a free gift. You need to do something to be Jesus' friend.
- Second, friendship with Jesus depends on obeying his commands. Friendship is earned. You have to do what Jesus says to be his friend. Do you usually think of your friends as people who obey whatever you command? Probably not! That should give you a clue that Jesus is not talking about the modern concept of friendship.
- Third, friendship with Jesus still means he is our master. "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing." Unlike slaves, we know what our master is doing. In other words, he is still our master. Friendship does not change that. We are not "pals" with Jesus. It is a hierarchical relationship.
- Fourth, friendship with Jesus means having intimate knowledge of his plans. Jesus tells his friends what the Father has told him: "for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." The difference between being a slave and being a friend comes down to a difference in knowledge. Jesus' friends know his mind.
- Fifth, this friendship is mission-oriented. Being friends with Jesus is not about spending leisure time with him. It's about being in a position to carry out Jesus' plans with the benefit of inside information. It means achieving greater intimacy with him through service to him. This friendship is costly.

[Shawn Lazar, Are You Jesus' Friend?](#)

## GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 = not at all; 10 = extremely), how would you rate your ability to be a good friend to others? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. Jesus calls those of us who are his friends to do what he commands us (vs 14). Is your friendship with Jesus thriving, maintaining, teetering, or non-existent?
3. Verse 13 says there is no greater love than one who lays down his life for his friends. What does it mean to you to know that Christ laid down his life for you? Do you have friendships with people who you are willing to lay your life down for?
4. "The difference between being a slave and being a friend comes down to a difference in knowledge. Jesus' friends know his mind." Based on these definitions of slave and friend, which one would you consider yourself, in light of your relationship with God?
5. Make a list of people you know who don't yet know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. How might you actively be a friend to them whilst looking for the chance to share the Gospel of Jesus with them? What might be your hindrances?

If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, would you choose today to trust him? Will you enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus?

Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

***Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to be the master of my life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. I declare that I am yours and you are mine. In Jesus' name, Amen.***