



PRAYER

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.

Prayer + Possibilities - Kathryn Shirley

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

Who was the first non-family close friend you ever had? Can you share one fond memory?



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WORD

12 *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 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. 16 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. 17 These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

[John 15](#)

Think for a moment about friendship. Friendships form when two people value each other, care about each other, and want to spend time together. I have a good friend that I don't get to see very often, and so every January we try to cram a whole year's worth of friendship into one day. We drive to Philadelphia (my favorite city) in the morning, spend all day together, and then drive home in the evening. In that time, we try to blitz through the things that make up a friendship—we catch up on how our families are doing, we check in on long-standing personal issues, we talk about work, we seek advice about difficult situations. We also have a lot of fun—we laugh, goof around, and tell stories. In short, we enjoy each other's company. That's something of what a friendship is—two people giving of themselves and caring about one another and enjoying one another.

And that's what friendship with God ought to look like. It is true that we don't contribute anything to our being made right with God, it is purely a gift of grace. But it also true that our ongoing friendship with God is an active and two-way relationship.

Here's how John Owen explained what it means to have this kind of back-and-forth friendship with God (using the word "communion" as roughly an equivalent of our word "friendship"): Our communion, then, with God consists in his communication of himself unto us, with our return unto him of that which he requires and accepts, flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with him.

[Our Friendship with God Is a Two-Way Street - by: Mike McKinley](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being never and 10 being always), how would you rate yourself as a friend to others? Why would you rate yourself this way?
2. How does your relationship with God inform or affect the way you relate to others?
3. v. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." Who are the people that you have in your life that would gladly do this for you? Who in your life would you gladly do this for?
4. v. 14 "You are my friends if you do what I command you" - what do you think this means and how it might look in your life?
5. If you would choose today to trust Jesus as the LORD of your life by accepting His call for you to enter into friendship with Him, take this moment to pray with your group. 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 lifegroup 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.