

Forever Friendships

Life Group Discussion Guide on Friendship

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for

“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
25 but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

And this word is the good news that was preached to you

1 Peter 1:22-25

I love meeting believers in Jesus from other places in the world.

Culturally speaking, I have been privileged to have Christian friends who don't speak the same language, eat the same foods, or wear the same clothes I do. By the world's standards, we should have nothing on which to build a relationship. When you know that a person is a brother in Christ, however, you instantly can feel the family ties when you are in the same room.

The Bible is abundantly clear that there is something special about the bonds of friendship between Christian believers.

Some relationships may be built on business, sports, food, hobbies, or the fact that you live near each other. Those types of relationship are important and good, but none of them will last forever.

The one basis for friendship that will never perish is the word of God.

A relationship is only as strong as its foundation. If a relationship is built on Jesus, it is built on something that can never be taken away. You will always have common ground with a friend in Christ.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” – **John 13:34-35**

Many people in our culture feel alone. As an introvert, there have been numerous times in my own life when I have struggled spiritually and felt as if I had no close friends. Every time I say

this to myself, God shows that it is simply a lie Satan uses to cut me off from the people who will spur me toward good works in Christ.

Everyone who belongs to Jesus has a built-in community of potential friends: it's called the Church!

The truth is that when I feel as if I have no friends, what I am really saying is that I am not being a good friend. In a normal, functioning, and healthy friendship you will receive back something close to the time, effort, affection, and love that you have put into the friendship.

Different people may love in different ways, but a believer in Jesus longs to express love to his friends in the way that God has gifted him to express love.

Scripture also tells us that the hallmark of all relationships in Christ is that we will love one another. Acts told us that the love and fellowship amongst believers in the first church was so intense that people wanted to be part of the church just so that they could be loved!

Christian love is not simply an emotional fondness you feel for some people and not others. Sure, emotional affection is a part of love, but no Christian can claim to have love if she does not put action to serving the person that she loves.

This is why we can rightly say that love is a verb. Love = service.

I have never seen a clearer picture of Christian friendships than the past several weeks at Venture. People have gone out of their way to serve one another in the face of a terrible tragedy. We have watched people take on the grief and needs of a family as if they were their very own. It's been a beautiful picture of service in action that I believe everyone should want to be a part of.

More than just good deeds, the service we've witnessed at Venture is wrapped in the Gospel of Jesus. The Word of God has become an anchor for the grief-stricken to cling to in the midst of their pain.

The takeaway for all of us is that relationships matter and love through service matters to relationships.

Discussion Questions

- With whom have you been friends the longest in your life?
- What is that friendship built around?
- How do you serve one another in that friendship?
- What does it mean to love one another with a pure heart?
- How does sincere and pure love contrast with love that is typically seen in the world?
- How does Jesus model friendship for us?
- What role does obedience play in becoming a good friend?

Life Group Discussion Guide

- Have there been times when you had to put a little bit of effort in your friendships to know that you had a friend?
- How do you need to put effort into serving your friends today?
- How will that strengthen your friendships?