



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

summary

(3/30/2014): “I Want to Have Friends”

While we live in a culture that lauds how "connected" we are to one another, the truth is that many of us feel alone, longing for true friends. We look at what Proverbs says about our need for friendship and how to realize this kind of community in our lives.

scripture

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. - Proverbs 18:24

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. - Proverbs 27:17

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. - Proverbs 13:20

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. - Proverbs 17:17

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. - Proverbs 27:5-6

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. - Proverbs 17:9

Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on soda. - Proverbs 25:20

Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house, lest he have his fill of you and hate you. - Proverbs 25:17

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. 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. - John 15:13-15

ask

1. Last Sunday we said that we often use the word “friend” to describe a large variety of people (think Facebook friends, random acquaintances, casual relationships, etc.). Unfortunately, when we ascribe the word “friend” to so many different types of people, we find ourselves not really having a clear definition of what this word means. **What does the term friend mean to you? What defines a friend? What distinguishes a friend from someone else?**
2. One of the realities of living in a city like Denver is that we’re literally surrounded by thousands of people. But even though we may be close to others by proximity, it’s often the case that we’re not very close relationally or emotionally. **Do you ever feel like you’re surrounded by everyone, but known by no one? Have you ever wondered why it’s so easy to be disconnected from any meaningful friendships while living in an era that is more “connected” than ever before?**
3. We often assume that the best type of friend we could have is one who perfectly complements us in every way, who understands us fully, and knows us in the most personal way. While those aren’t bad qualities, we believe that our greatest need is not a friend who perfectly complements us, but someone who refines us into who God wants us to be. **What do you look for in a friend? Do you have any friends who currently do that in your life? Are you trying to do that in anyone else’s life? What do you think it would look like to have a relationship with another man or woman who helps refine you to be more like Jesus?**
4. The book of Proverbs provides a number of characteristics that describe what it means to be a good friend and, consequently, what we should look for in a friend: Responsible, Dependable, Honest, Forgiving, Sensitive, Respectful of

Boundaries. **Which of these do you most appreciate in a friend? Which of these do you most want to be? Which of these do you have the most room to grow in?**

apply

1. If you're someone who feels isolated and alone, it's easy to feel like you're "alone" in feeling this way. That is, we feel like no one else struggles with feelings of loneliness and longings for friendship. Understandably, it's hard to vocalize this to others. Have you ever expressed this? Do you feel this? Who do you think you could share this with this week in order to begin seeking out true, meaningful friendships?
2. Are you being the type of friend to others that God says we all need? What needs to begin changing? What do you think you could start doing differently *in the relationships God has already given you* to begin living like a "friend that is closer than a brother"?
3. Do you have other people in your life who you're able to be honest with about the most important areas of your life? A friend who walks thru life beside you? This week, maybe you can take initiative to "open up" to someone you trust. Someone who will help cultivate a friendship that is based on refining one another, and not just simply complementing one another.
4. If you're trying to develop more meaningful relationships within The Summit Church, here are a few ways in which you can get more involved:
 - City Groups - these are smaller groups from The Summit community that meet in different homes on different nights throughout the city. It's within our City Groups that relationships are formed and deepened.
 - Serving - another fantastic way to get more involved at The Summit is to begin serving on Sundays. You'll have the opportunity to work side-by-side other men and women of The Summit and have the chance to develop friendships with them.