



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

"Friends: Horizontal Friendship"

Ps Michael & Pennie Shepard – Feb. 9, 2014

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- When you grew up was your home a very social place? How often did your parents have friends and family over?
- What did your parents like to do for social activities with other people when you were young?
- What family activities did you especially enjoy when you were growing up?

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

Biblical friendship involves companionship, faithfulness, loyalty, support, encouragement, comfort, reliability, correction, prayer, and more.

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 ESV)

There are benefits and rewards for friendship.

Godly friendship sharpens your sense of purpose for your life. Godly friends sharpen you like iron, so that you are a useful instrument in the hands of God.

Friends pick you up when you fall. When you are overwhelmed inwardly, a friend can lift you up and pull you out of the pit.

"If two lie together, they keep warm." This is talking about more than the relationship of a husband and wife. This also involves friendship that brings warmth of heart. Good friends allow us to feel secure, to be at rest, and to be ourselves.

The threefold cord speaks of having several quality friendships. Such friendships bring great strength into our lives. There are times we are tired and weak, and we need several friends to cover us and protect us from evil. Abishai was such a friend to King David. David had slain a Philistine giant in a military battle when David was young. When David grew older the giant's son sought to kill David, but Abishai came to his rescue and slew the giant's son. Similarly, good friends protect one another.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. (1 Samuel 18:3, 4 ESV)

Jonathan took off his princely robe and gave it to David.. This symbolized Jonathan giving his status and resources to his friend. Friends give their strengths to meet their friends' needs.

Jonathan also gave his armor to David in order to help protect him. Friends protect one another and defend one another, especially from their spiritual enemies.

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

Consistency is important to lasting friendship. Good friends don't waver in their commitment.

Love covers a multitude of sins. It doesn't deny the sins, but it forgives sin and helps a person overcome sin.

Friends rise up and come alive in adversity. A good friend comes to the aid of a friend in trouble.

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

Friendship is the ministry of simply being there in a time of need. You don't always have to know what to say or how to help fix a situation. Just being with a person is often deeply meaningful and able to strengthen them.

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. (Proverbs 27:9 ESV)

Friends can supply perspective, insight, and wisdom at times when we need input.

Commitment involves deposit. Questions of what I'm getting out of a relationship is not focused on commitment. Commitment is concerned with what we are putting into a relationship.

Friendship brings the best out of us. If we are good friends, then we will seek to bring the best out of others.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

- What is one strength and one weakness you bring in friendship to others?
- How might you overcome your main weakness in being a good godly friend?
- What does the Scripture mean when it refers to Jesus as a friend of sinners?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- That God would inspire and challenge us to become quality godly friends to others, especially to our spouses if we are married.
- That God would expand our hearts to be able to add a new friend into our lives, and give us the discernment as to who that might be.
- That God would give us practical ideas for concrete action that we can take to strengthen our friendships.