

*Oil and perfume make the heart glad,
and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.
Prov. 27:9*

Directions

Connect Group leaders can either read aloud (or have a group member read aloud) the material in this session or email the session beforehand for group members to review.

Check In [12-15 minutes]

1. What reflections did you have from Sunday's service about friendship?
2. From your experience, what do you think makes a good friend?

Pray [1 minute]

3. Read Psalm 23 as an opening prayer to God.
4. How does God befriend us?

Remembering God's Word [40 minutes]

How do we make friends? How do we keep them? The book of Proverbs says much about friendship. When you read a Proverb, it is important that you read the first clause in relationship with the second clause as they tend to work together and off of each other. Try thinking about this as you read each proverb.

5. Read the following Proverbs and discuss what they mean and imply as it concerns friendship. What does Proverbs say about making friends and keeping friends?
 - a. Prov. 17:17
 - b. Prov. 22:11
 - c. Prov. 25:6-10 (the English words "neighbor" and "friend" are actually the same in Hebrew = *re'a*)

- d. Prov. 27:9
 - i. The word for “earnest” here is *nefesh* which also means “soul.” What does earnest counsel or soul counsel look like?
 - ii. Have you ever had a friendship where you could each bear your soul and innermost thoughts and feelings? What was that like? What was rewarding? What was uncomfortable?
 - e. Prov. 27:10
 - i. What is this proverb saying? Who should we turn to in times of distress? (Remember “neighbor” here synonymous to “friend”)
 - ii. Do you find this wisdom to be true in your life?
 - f. Prov. 27:14 (duh!)
 - g. Prov. 27:17
 - i. Do you have an example in your life of a friendship sharpening you?
6. What major themes stick out to you from our readings in Proverbs as it concerns friendship?
 - a. What makes a good friend?
 - b. What kinds of things can I be responsible for in continuing the friendship?
 7. What would you add as it concerns good and healthy friendship? Do any other biblical passages come to mind?
 8. Take a few minutes and share with the group a person who has been a good friend to you over the years. Why has this friend made such an impact on you? How did you meet? What do you enjoy about seeing or being with this person?

Paul was an apostle in the New Testament who was beloved by many. While Paul wrote letters to encourage and guide churches in various cities and regions, he also wrote encouraging letters to young men like Timothy and Titus that he had begun friendships with.

9. Consider this week or the next writing your friend a letter, card, or email to express your gratitude toward them for the friendship you have enjoyed. Perhaps you might encourage them in their job or role in the family or something else they are committed to. Write this note and send it on... remember, the sweetness of a friend comes from earnest counsel!

Close in prayer.