

MY APPLICATION

Find someone to answer these questions with this week:

- ♦ If my closest friends define my future,
am I content with the direction they're leading me?
 - ♦ In what ways have my relationships sharpened my faith,
or dulled it through compromise?
 - ♦ How might prioritizing presence over digital connection
transform my daily interactions?
 - ♦ What weaknesses could I share with a trusted friend to
foster deeper healing and bond?
 - ♦ Are my friendships motivating me toward acts of love,
or settling for superficial comfort?
 - ♦ If God wants me interdependent in community,
where am I still clinging to independence?
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Ladies Night

Taco Bar & Worship
Music

September 19 @ 5:45

See Joana to sign
up and help out!



**YOUR
FRIENDS**

=

**YOUR
FUTURE**

FRIENDSHIP

Walk with the wise and become wise;
associate with fools and get in trouble.

— Proverbs 13:20 NLT

LIST YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.
— Proverbs 17:17 NIV
— James 1:6 ERV

WHY ARE FRIENDSHIPS DECLINING?

- ◆ WE ARE INCREASING THE NUMBER OF HOURS WE SPEND WORKING
- ◆ RISING UNION DISSOLUTION RATES
- ◆ EXPLOSION OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Some friends don't help,
but a true friend is closer than your own family.
— Proverbs 18:24 CEV

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

LEARN TO BE PRESENT

Let us think of ways to motivate one another
to acts of love and good works.

— Hebrews 10:24

And let us not neglect our meeting together,
as some people do, but encourage one another,
especially now that the day of his return
is drawing near.

— Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT

LEARN TO BE OPEN

Confess your sins to each other and
pray for each other so that you may be healed...
— James 5:16 NLT

THE POWER OF PRESENCE

Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" — Matthew 4:19

Being present in relationships unleashes God's power, as Jesus modeled by inviting disciples to follow Him, sharing life, meals, and ministry together. Presence means more than proximity; it's emotional availability, setting aside distractions to truly engage. In a distracted age, prioritizing face-to-face time honors others and invites divine encounters. When two or three gather in His name, Christ is there, manifesting in encouragement, wisdom, and comfort.

Physical and emotional presence matters: a silent sit during grief, a shared laugh in joy, or a prayer in crisis. It communicates value, it says "You matter to me." Jesus didn't send letters; He walked with people, teaching through shared experiences. We too can emulate this: put down devices at meals, visit the hurting, or gather for purposeful fellowship.

The benefits are profound: stronger families, deeper friendships, and vibrant faith communities. Presence combats loneliness, fostering trust and growth. In trials, a friend's showing up echoes God's faithfulness. Commit to being there, both physically and emotionally, for those God places in your path. Through presence, we embody Christ's love, transforming ordinary moments into sacred ones.

Prayer: Loving Father, teach me to follow Jesus' example of presence. Help me set aside distractions to be fully available to others. May my presence bring Your comfort and encouragement to others. Strengthen my relationships through intentional togetherness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WISE COMPANIONS LEAD TO WISE LIVES

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble. — Proverbs 13:20

In the journey of life, the people we surround ourselves with profoundly influence our direction and destiny. Choosing companions who embody wisdom can elevate our own thinking and actions. Imagine a group where conversations spark growth, where challenges are met with encouragement rooted in faith, and where accountability fosters personal development.

These relationships don't happen by accident; they require intentional pursuit. We must evaluate our circles: Do they inspire us toward godly pursuits, or do they pull us into complacency or worse?

Wisdom isn't just about knowledge; it's about applying God's principles in everyday situations. When we align with wise individuals, we absorb their habits, perspectives, and resilience. For instance, in times of decision-making, a wise friend's counsel can steer us away from pitfalls, much like a lighthouse guides ships through storms.

To cultivate wise friendships, start by seeking out those who prioritize Scripture, prayer, and service. Join small groups, volunteer in community outreach, or engage in Bible studies where like-minded believers gather. Be the initiator: invite someone for coffee to discuss faith journeys. Remember, wisdom is contagious; as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of relationships that shape us. Help me to seek wise companions who draw me closer to You. Give me discernment to choose friends who inspire growth and protect me from influences that lead to trouble. May my life reflect Your wisdom through the company I keep. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A FRIEND LOVES AT ALL TIMES

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother
is born for a time of adversity. — Proverbs 17:17*

True friendship is a rare and precious gift, characterized by unwavering love that persists through every season of life. It's not conditional on circumstances but rooted in commitment, much like God's steadfast love for us. A genuine friend celebrates joys, shares burdens, and stands firm during trials.

Think of those moments when life feels overwhelming, a job loss, a health scare, or a personal failure and a friend shows up, not with solutions, but with presence and empathy. This love mirrors Christ's sacrificial friendship, offering support without judgment.

This bond requires vulnerability, sharing our true selves, flaws included. It fosters growth, as friends challenge us to be better while affirming our worth. To build such relationships, invest time in listening, offering honest feedback, and praying together. Avoid superficial interactions; instead, cultivate depth through shared experiences, like serving in ministry or studying God's Word side by side.

Challenges to deep friendships abound in our fast-paced world, but overcoming them starts with intentionality. Forgive quickly, as love covers offenses, and extend grace as we've received it. Remember, Jesus called His disciples friends, revealing His heart to them. We too can emulate this by being reliable, compassionate, and faithful.

Prayer: Lord God, thank You for being the ultimate Friend who loves us unconditionally. Teach me to love my friends at all times, especially in adversity. Help me to be a brother or sister who supports and uplifts. Strengthen my relationships with Your love, and bring godly friends into my life. Amen..

CONFESS AND HEAL TOGETHER

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other
so that you may be healed... — James 5:16*

Opening up in relationships brings healing and deeper connections, as Scripture urges us to confess sins and pray together. Vulnerability isn't weakness; it's the bridge to authentic bonds, allowing God's grace to work through others. When we share struggles, anger, doubt and addictions with trusted believers, we invite prayer and support that leads to restoration. This mutual confession fulfills Christ's command to love one another, lightening burdens and fostering empathy.

Hiding flaws isolates us, but transparency connects us through shared humanity. We impress with strengths, yet bond over weaknesses, discovering we're not alone. A friend's godly counsel and intercession can break chains, as righteous prayers avail much. To practice this, cultivate safe spaces: choose confidants who are mature in faith, committed to confidentiality and encouragement. Start small like sharing a recent challenge and then build toward deeper revelations.

Healing follows: emotional wounds mend, spiritual growth accelerates, and relationships strengthen. In community, confessions turn into testimonies of God's faithfulness. Resist fear; embrace openness as a path to freedom. By confessing and praying, we experience collective healing, reflecting the body of Christ in unity.

Prayer: Almighty God, give me courage to confess my sins to trusted friends and pray for theirs. Let our transparency bring healing and deeper bonds. Make our prayers powerful and effective, drawing us closer to You. Help me connect through vulnerabilities, fulfilling Your law of love. Amen.