

"You are My Friends"

John 15: 13-17

5/22/22

Discussion Guide

Find a song about friendship with God and either sing it or listen to it as a group in preparation for the discussion. Then read the passage.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other." John 15:13-17

1. Let's begin with a free for all. This one question may be enough to take up the entire discussion time! Share 1-2 things that you'd like to discuss from the message. Any quotes or thoughts that you want to explore more, the hit you or you have questions about?
2. Movies and TV shows depicting people sharing strong friendships are popular and moving. Why is that? Do you have a favorite movie or TV show that is centered around friendships or a particular friendship? Why is the movie/show one of your favorites?
3. Growing up did you have many friends? Has it been easy for you or hard for you to make friends? If it's been hard, looking back, why do you think that is?
4. How much effort have you made in your life to make and keep friends? Do you have a circle of friends you confide now?
5. Do you have a person/persons with whom you've been friends for a long time? If so, share what that friendship has meant to you. What makes him/her/them such good friends?
6. React to this statement: *"All of our other problems like lust, greed, anger, selfishness arise out of our sinfulness, our imperfections. But Loneliness is the one problem we have that arises out of our perfection. Are you lonely or have you been lonely? It's not because there is something wrong with you. It is actually because there is something right with you."*
7. Think about this: Adam was created perfect. He lived in Paradise. He was friends with God. They spent many evening walking and talking. Adam had a busy job naming all the species God created and that still wasn't enough to take away his loneliness. God wasn't enough to take away his loneliness. What does this say about the importance of friends in our lives?
8. God is referred to in many ways in the Bible: Lord, Master, the Lord of Heavens Armies, the Almighty God, the Sovereign Lord, the King of Kings, the Ancient One, the Rock. Lots of sermons and books have been written on the names of God that reflect power and transcendence. How often have you heard a message or read a book on God as friend and imminent?
9. How does it feel to have God as your friend?

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10. A friend is someone who lets you in and shares their secrets with you, and is always there for you. Talk about these two marks of a friend. Are there other marks of a friend or do these two capture the two most important qualities of a true friend?
11. Share a time when you felt the real presence of God, that there really was a living person behind the Scriptures, behind the abstract concept of "God" who moved you, spoke to you, comforted you, and convicted you.
12. Have you ever thought about the difference between our laying down our lives for another and Jesus' laying down his life for us? Does that minimize the sacrifice people make or maximize what Jesus did for us on the cross?
13. Stories where the heroine lays down his/her life for another move us deeply. Why is that?
Share a movie that has always touched your heart that involves the laying down of one's life for a friend/friends? What about stories, fictional or real, where a person dies for a stranger(s)? How do they affect you?
14. What do you lay down for your friends?