



Icebreaker

Who is your longest standing friend and how did you first meet?

What is it about this friend that has meant you have stayed in touch all this time?

Scriptures – Proverbs

If you want to work on friendships, consider these points:

1. **Choose your friends wisely** - because you're worth it!

Proverbs 13:20 *"One who walks with the wise gets wise, but the friend of stupid people experiences evil things"*

Proverbs 27:6-7 *"Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. One who is full loathes honey from the comb, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet."*

2. **Don't outstay your welcome** - leave people wanting more of you...

Proverbs 25: 17, *"Let your foot hold back from your neighbour's house, lest he gets his fill of you and reject you."*

3. **Learn to give yourself wholeheartedly to friendships** - hold up your end of the friendship

Proverbs 18:24 *"There are neighbours to act like neighbours, and there's one who gives himself, who sticks firmer than a brother."*

4. **Sharpen your friends** - in every way inspiring them to go deeper with Jesus

Proverbs 27:17, *"Iron sharpens iron, and a person sharpens the edge of his friend."*

Discussion Questions

1. We often talk about considering carefully how to spend your money or who the right person to marry is or what career to choose.
 - a. Do we spend the same amount of time thinking about who we spend our time and energy on in friendship? Or do friendships just happen? Are they a function of who we grew up with, who we live next to or work with or who's in our family? Do we simply choose the first person who comes along offering friendship?
 - b. Do we settle for bitter or sweet friends - wise friends or troublemakers? Do we know how important our friendship is to others?
2. How do people feel about outstaying one's welcome? Is it a problem? Is this an issue for you? Do you know when the right time to leave is? May be you have friends who tend to outstay their welcome, what, if anything have you done?
3. Are you someone who finds friendships easy or hard? Or do you find you have to work at maintaining friendships? How have you maintained close friends?



Application

Consider your current and future friends!

1. Which people do you need to spend less time with, because they are a "bitter" influence - drawing you away from Jesus?
2. Which people do you need to get to know/prioritise, who will sharpen you and draw you closer to Jesus?
3. And which people do you feel you can positively sharpen and help in drawing closer to Jesus?

Prayer

Perhaps, you can pray for each others' friendships.

- If people feel they lack good friends, to pray for this.
- If people feel they have plenty of good friends, pray for opportunities to demonstrate friendship to those who have no friends.
- If people have identified friends within each of the 3 categories above, to pray for courage to pull away from some friendships and courage to initiate new ones.