

#### IV. Spiritual Friendships are forever

All creation was about making us friends with God and one another. All redemption is about remaking us friends.

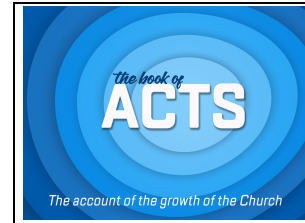
For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. Romans 5:10

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. 1 John 4:11

Therefore, Christianity says, "Life is about friendship. Go get it.

#### Community Group Questions:

1. Describe how you love one another?
2. Has grace of God ever been the reason for a new friendship?
3. Do you have a friendship to repair, what can you do to repair it?
4. To those of you who are married, is your spouse your best friend? If not, what steps can you take to make that a reality?



#### Spiritual Friendships

#### Acts 21:1-8

<sup>17</sup> From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

**Acts 21:1-8** <sup>1</sup> After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. <sup>2</sup> We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. <sup>3</sup> After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo.

<sup>4</sup> Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.

<sup>6</sup> After saying good-by to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. <sup>7</sup> We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.

<sup>8</sup> Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

### ***I. Spiritual friendships are a sign of Christian maturity.***

We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo.<sup>4</sup> *Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days.* Acts 21:3,4

Jesus constantly shared his heart and thoughts with his friends. I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. Luke 12:50

The church has always united at because we've all come to the same well to drink. We've all come empty handed before God. Our baseline has always been humility.

Spiritual friendships are foundational to our belief system. So now I am (Jesus) giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:34,35

### ***II. Spiritual friendship's foundation is grace.***

When Paul gets to Tyre, he's getting to a church he did not start. He's meeting Christians who, probably, he has never met before.

They feel it is their right to tell him what he should do. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Acts 21:4

Astonishingly, Paul doesn't say, "How dare you?" "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me,<sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. Acts 20:22,23

Instead, we see a dedicated Christian community built on grace. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. Acts 21:5

When grace comes in there's an *automatic* bond that is applied. "Maintain the spirit of unity in the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:3



Tim Keller: "You're a Christian first, and you're anything else second. If you've experienced grace, you find yourself coming to love people that you would have never spent time with before. *One of the ways you know something has happened to you.*"

### ***III. Spiritual friendships share with one another.***

1. *They shared hospitality.*  
Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Vs. 4a

2. *They spoke into Paul's life.*  
Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Vs 4b

At Paul's next stop he heard a similar refrain:  
...the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Acts 21:12

Paul answered: "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus." <sup>14</sup>When it was clear that we couldn't persuade him, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." Acts 21;13,14

Acts 20:22, Paul says, "The Spirit told him to go to Jerusalem." They didn't say, "The Spirit told us you shouldn't go" Paul didn't say, "Look. The Spirit told me I have to go, so why are we having this discussion?"

In both instances these are friends caring for one another.

"Exhort one another daily; lest ye be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13