

Fit Out: Living Room

The Life Transforming Power of Spiritual Friendships

1 Sam 18; Matt 26.36-39

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Where Do You Live?

Today I want to move from where you eat to where you live. We move into the living room.

It is the first place you take a guest to.

It is where you spend most of your time.

When you spend the time here in the living room, consider;

Are you a transformational person?

Do people want to be around you?

When people speak to you, does your words inspire change or are they really thinking "why don't you just be quiet"

Where you live could be places where toxic relationships are formed instead of wholesome relationships.

All of us want to be liked don't we- it's a normal human trait.

Those impressions sometimes determines whether someone wants to spend the rest of their live with you or want to run a mile.

The friendships we make will determine whether someone wants to share their true thoughts with you, their pain or indeed share happy times.

So today as I invite you to check where you live

I want to share with you

- 1) The intriguing relationship of a Son, a father and the friend David
- 2) The friendship test
- 3) This will help you to consider where you transform lives or hinder lives.

Why Have Friends- I like being alone!

- **Those who enjoy being alone** could explorers, composers and writers . It is their thinking time.
- **Then there are those who have a fear of physical contact** like those who fear getting dirty,
- **Then there are those who are just lonely because they cannot form friendships** and they are not sure what to do about it. This happens when no friendships are formed.

The charity MIND produced a document “How to cope with loneliness” and they gave 3 examples of circumstances where it is most likely to happen.

- **College student:** e.g “Everyone said University would be great, but for me it was torture. I felt miserable, shy and alone, as if I was on one side of a glass and everyone else was on the other side”
- **Change in Age:** e.g I suppose it’s known as mid life crisis- I have two daughters and a wonderful wife. As soon as I hit forty I went into a downward spiral and I felt lonely.”
- **Christmas time:** e.g Mostly I am ok- it’s just Christmas time that it hits me worst as that is when he died. Then I stare at an empty chair and feel swamped with an awful aching loneliness.

This shows that there is still a need to be cherished, cared for, form friendships. You may be married but still find it difficult to meet friends.

How Do you meet friends?

Note first impressions in the story of David, Jonathan and Saul..

Lets look at the example God gives us to form friendships and I want to tell you about

David, who we learn was a handsome, young man and very brave and God was with him. Then you have **King Saul** that gets anything he wants, when he wants because he is king, but we are told God spirit was no longer with Saul and then you have **Jonathan stuck right in the middle**. These three relationships should help us to understand how we need to behave to be a true friend. Now David had just finished killing Goliath, the Philistine and made an impression on Saul and Jonathan.

PP - 1 Sam 19:1 After King Saul had finished his conversation with David, David met Jonathan, the king's son, and there was an immediate bond of love between them. Jonathan swore to be his blood brother; ⁴and sealed the pact by giving him his robe, sword, bow, and belt.1 The Living Bible

The first thing to consider when meeting **a new friend** is consider

¹*The Living Bible*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1997.

a) **Is there a connection.** In David and Jonathan's case there was “**an immediate bond**”. Something just clicked. The issue is what are you going to do with it. Once there is connection

b) **Check whether the person is really a fan in disguise as a friend**

The way Saul meets David is different. Here comes King Saul – out for what he can get meets David. 1 Samuel 16 ²¹**From the instant he saw David, Saul admired and loved him; and David became his bodyguard.**²²**Then Saul wrote to Jesse, “Please let David join my staff, for I am very fond of him.”**²³**And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp and Saul would feel better, and the evil spirit would go away.**³**The Living Bible**

Check whether the friendships you form are all air and no substance. I love the way you do your hair, I love your singing, I love your dancing, oh he's so handsome or she is so pretty. Fans are changeable. The people loved David and the women cheered about his victory 1 Sam 1: **“Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands!”**⁴**Living Bible.** We learn that this same Saul was angry and jealous angry and fearful. That same person you thought was your friend was really an enemy. **Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.**

²*The Living Bible*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1997.

³*The Living Bible*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1997.

So when you meet someone, always assume the best in that person as David did, as we are told on more than one occasion that David **behaved himself wisely**.

This is part of being transformational. Remember the acronym of Friend to guide you on how you should be with others.

1. Being a Friend

FAITHFUL– Is there a sign of commitment in that person. He/ She supports you. (**Shelf**- is a support that consists of a horizontal surface for holding things.)~ This means a person that is actually committed to the friendship.

Q Have you got supportive friends

Q Can you lean on them when its touch

From time to time you need a person to keep you level headed.

The Bible says “Faithful are the wounds of a friend . They are not always going to tell you what you want to hear.

Jonathan takes off his robe belt and other garments to show his commitment. . A friend who is equally faithful in your presence as in your absence. A faithful friend will defend your reputation and are interested in you becoming the best you can be.

Real – Can you be yourself with that person.

A person you can be real with.

It is where the mask comes off.

You can kick off your shoes and sit, lay on the sofa and no one will judge you in your living.

You can share your private thoughts openly, comfortably and it becomes therapeutic

A real friend warns you of any trouble.

1 Sam 19 Saul now urged his aides and his son Jonathan to assassinate David. But Jonathan, because of his close friendship with David, ²told him what his father was planning. “Tomorrow morning,” he warned him, “you must find a hiding place out in the fields. ⁵NLT

A real friend is there for you when you are in trouble. Jesus took his close friends, Peter, James and John to pray with him and he shares it in Mathew 26: 26-39. “He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed”

Then he said to them_“**My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even to death. Stay here and watch with me”**

He took Peter, James and John with him and shared his intimate and valuable thoughts of how he was feeling. The scripture says

- **Interesting**- A person who stimulates your mind.
- **There is something in you which stimulates me, intrigues me, someone you can learn from.**
- **They challenge you and move you forward**
- **Contrast** this with a person encourages you to be your worst
- A person who compromises your integrity. (e.g. sleep with me you know you want to, smoke this pot , I know it's not good for you but it will get you through the day.

- Check where you live?
- They are being transformational enough to encourage you.
- **Entertaining / Enjoyable** (You can have fun with them)
 - The person who lifts your spirits.
 - You want to eat with them and they will not embarrass you in public.
 - A person who **stands by** your side and it is clear you walk together.
 - Contrast- a person who wants to be your friend only in private and no one should know about it.
- Check where you live?
- **Necessary** – Having a friend is necessary. It is not for the few. Every one needs a friend. Human beings are designed to have relationships. God said “ It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper suitable for him. (Genesis “.18 NIV) We are designed to live and work together.
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 –NIV “ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up, but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”
- **No man is an island. The study**
- **Dependable** - loyal. Dependable is connected to being faithful.
- Faithful is about character and dependable relates to the behaviour of that friend.

Jonathan keeps his word

³I'll ask my father to go out there with me, and I'll talk to him about you; then I'll tell you everything I can find out."

⁴The next morning as Jonathan and his father were talking together, he spoke well of David and begged him not to be against David.

- **Dependable relates to trust also.** If you have stored something with someone that person is being transformational when he does not disclose it. (Like locked draws or fine china, which only comes out when required.
- **Does anyone have your back.** There will be times when you cannot see the big picture but your friend can and they will warn you and speak on your behalf. 1 Sam 19 2-6 He's never done anything to harm you," Jonathan pleaded. "He has always helped you in any way he could. ⁵Have you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill Goliath, and how the Lord brought a great victory to Israel as a result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you now murder an innocent man? There is no reason for it at all!"
- ⁶Finally Saul agreed and vowed, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed⁶NLT

Other things to remember in friendships are

Top practical tips

⁶*The Living Bible*, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1997.

2) Friendships may not last forever so just enjoy whilst they last.

3) Don't try and hold on to friendships if they have run their course as they may affect your growth.

4) There may be times when friendship test clashes with the family – Always use the transformational guide line- is it building a person up or bring them down.

³³Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him; so at last Jonathan realized that his father really meant it when he said David must die. ³⁴Jonathan left the table in fierce anger and refused to eat all that day, for he was crushed by his father's shameful behavior toward David.⁷

Some friendships can continue from a distance.

Conclusion

Christ continue to reach out to us from a distance when we did not want to know him. God never stopped loving you and reaching out and say hey I am a friend. Now we are in Christ he has become a friend which does stick closer than a brother.

When he was at his lowest ebb. He went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying "Oh my Father"

- There will be times that no one else will ever be as intimate to you than your Father who knows you, understands you, does not judge you. His friendship is supreme.

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother does"

⁷The Living Bible, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1997.

The transformation comes when you reach out and want to make a difference even if the person is different to you. God gives to us and we give out to others.

When my father left I was about to be one of those women who trust no one, but God spoke to Paul to speak to me and there was something about him which reached out and healed the hurt. To top it all if I had not asked God to help me in my walk with Him I would never have found my love. Ask him to walk with you today and be a friend. When you walk you may just find the right place to live. LET IT HAPPEN, DEVELOP THOSE FRIENDSHIPS AND REMEMBER THE KIND OF FRIEND TO LOOK FOR AND THE KIND OF PERSON YOU SHOULD BE.

FAITHFUL

REAL

INTERESTING

ENTERTAINING

NECESSARY

DEPENDABLE

“When I reflect on how over the years my own friends have challenged me to grow, I recall numerous examples. Most of them relate to the personality thread that is my particular besetting sin. One good friend in high school confronted me on my arrogance. I deflected the confrontation. However, I took more note of it when another friend a few years later framed the same issue in terms of my detachment.

Some years later my closest friend—my wife—prodded me to reflect on the anger that often seemed to lurk beneath the surface. A pattern emerged, built around the dynamics of pride, detachment and feelings of entitlement. [These dynamics are right at the center of my blind spot and I need friends to see them] ... Love cannot ignore things that are self-destructive in the loved one. By daring to be honest with us, friends offer us invaluable opportunities for growth. They can help us penetrate our self-deceptions and cherished illusions.”
-David G. Benner, Sacred Companions, p.70

Practical tips for Intranet

finding a friend and Improving on Friendships

- Ask someone How do I come across?
- Say to them I honestly want to know so I can improve on my people skills.
- Now you go away and assess whether it is true (Maybe ask more than one person)
- If people have told you the same thing in the past have a hard think about it.
- Then consider if I was living and working with you, how would I like it.
- At the

- **end you may decide not to change but as long as you know what your behaviour is costing you.**