

Friendship

I love my friends, they continue to support me when I'm feeling down, they share in my laughter, when I'm feeling great, they even listen to all my life complaints; but most of all they forgive me when I make mistakes, even when I get caught up in my business and ignore them my friends the most, because I know they will understand. I can't imagine life without 'friends. Even more so in these 18 months or so as we navigate a new virtual world. We are not able to hold someone's hand, give a hug, or wipe away a tear.

I have been alone more in the past months than in any other time in my life. I am aware that some people have struggled more than others during this time. We all experience things in our own way. I can't imagine having to go through this alone, and yet I know several people that are having to cope on their own. I'm very blessed to have a supportive husband, family and friends. I cherish each of them and am Thankful and Gratzful that they are part of my life.

We know friends are wonderful, especially when we share the same opinions, views and values. When they agree with you it is great, but what happens if they disagree? What happens if you are both strong willed? Dare I say sometimes opinionated even! Maybe stop and ask yourself this question 'is your opinion so important to you that it is worth damaging or breaking your friendship'? So, show your friend they are more important to you than your opinion. Find a way to drop the topic, change directions. Stop the quarrel before it starts.

Proverbs 17: 14 - Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Friendship requires accountability and a willingness to help. When you fall and we all fall at some point in our lives in one sense or another. A true friend offers support, will help you up, sometimes you need a whole village of friends. They can truly be a great support system in time of need. This is a real benefit of friendship. The other side is as a good friend there is a responsibility to help and support each other even to the extent of helping the other person to make a change. Alone it is much harder to be strong or even to know when you need to change something in your life.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 – 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 one knows everything. Life is a continuous process of learning. There is always more we can learn about any given topic. Again, friends are or at least can be very helpful in this process. Through stimulating discussions, sharing differing view points and challenging observations help us grow. Make the time to engage in conversations about a variety of topics (personally I struggle with politics but...). Differences of opinion should not become a deterrent to friendship.

One of the best learning environments in my faith development was our 'Conversations in Faith Group' which was led by Reverend Bob Snelling with a group of us of Trinity and St. Peter's,

Alone

"Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone."

Maya Angelou - 1928-2014

this included Gary and Elaine Bart from Howdenvale. I made my first friends here in the Peninsula on both sides of the fence so to speak (Lutheran and Anglican). The more we got to know each other the more comfortable we became in asking our faith questions. Gary and Paul Bruer were both great debaters and Bob had a special skill helping us to dig a little deeper. I know that I learned so much from those great conversations. Yes, there were differences of opinion among the group but the real importance here was the friendship and trust we built up to be able to freely ask those questions, to be honest about our concerns and yes even to be able to sometimes express our doubts. We often laughed together and Bob would say the original name they came up with for the group was 'Doubters Anonymous'!

Proverbs 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

One of the marks of true friendship is forgiveness. Forgiveness with no strings attached. Can any of us say we have never made a mistake or hurt someone. I certainly know I can't. While I don't think I have ever intentionally hurt someone, I know I have done so inadvertently. On occasion something has come out of my mouth and immediately I know I shouldn't have said that. Other times I'm pretty slow on the uptake and it has taken me awhile to realize that maybe what I said could have been taken the wrong way. I don't like disappointing people or hurting them but I know I'm human, and I feel such relief when they forgive me. Sometimes the forgiveness is said other times it is just shown in a simple gesture or action. But I know. The fact is if we think about it for just a minute, about life and our lifetime of activities of learning, growing, making mistakes along the way how much God forgives us! The little bit of forgiving we might do for our friends is the real scheme of things is less than a hill of beans, less than a single bean. Be example of God's love forgiving others.

Ephesians 4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Charlotte Ewbank