

Friends That Stick

Acts 20:1-16

“Paul does not travel alone. He brings an entourage of key leaders from each mission, most of them Greek... Like David had his mighty men and Jesus had his Twelve, Paul has his companions. The mission of God takes collaboration; it takes friends.” Patrick Schreiner

A friend is someone "who lets you in" and "doesn't let you down." - Tim Keller

“In friendship... we think we have chosen our peers. In reality a few years’ difference in the dates of our births, a few more miles between certain houses, the choice of one university over another... the accident of a topic being raised or not raised at a first meeting – any of these chances could have kept us apart. But, for a Christian, there are strictly speaking, no chances. **A secret Master of Ceremonies has been at work.** Christ, who said to his disciples, ‘Ye have not chosen one me, but I have chosen you,’ can truly say to very group of friends, ‘Ye have not chosen one another but I have chosen you for one another.’” CS Lewis

“The friendship is not the reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each of us the beauties of others... At this feast, it is he who has spread the board, and it is he who has chosen the guests.” CS Lewis

I. Friends Step Up For the Journey. Acts 20:1-6

“After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.” Acts 20:1-3

“Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.” Acts 20:4-6

Christian friendship is a deliberate act of faith where you step up in order to encourage and to bless another person in the power of the Spirit for the sake of Jesus.

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” John 15:13-15

Friendship is a journey where we experience the heartaches and hardships and blessings and opportunities as a mutually edifying experience.

“It’s not simply about going to concerts together or enjoying the same sporting event. It is the deep oneness that develops as two people journey together toward the same destination, helping one another through the dangers and the challenges along the way.” - Tim Keller

II. Friends Sacrifice For Each Other’s Mutual Benefit. Acts 20:7-12

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.” Acts 20:7-9

Christian friends find spiritual fellowship and community as precious and vital to their lives.

“We started with just a few people meeting in secret, and shortly after, we grew into a house church with over 30 members,” Somayeh says excitedly. “On special nights like Christmas, we sometimes had as many as 50 people! When people came to faith, I knew I had to provide them with spiritual nourishment. I had to be cautious, though, to avoid any issues with my husband.” Somayeh, a convert to Christianity in Iran

What did they do?

- They broke bread.
- They studied the Word of God.
- They experienced the power of the resurrection.

“God has designed his church so that its members endure to the end in faith by means of giving and receiving faith-sustaining words from each other. You and I are the instruments by which God preserves the faith of his children. Perseverance is a community project. Just like

God is not going to evangelize the world without human, faith-awakening voices, neither is he going to preserve his church without human faith-sustaining voices." John Piper

III. Friends Follow Through To The End. Acts 20:13-16

"But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. And sailing from there, we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. For Paul decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost." Acts 20:13-16

"I made a promise, Mister Frodo. A promise! 'Don't you leave him Samwise Gamgee.' And I don't mean to! I don't mean to."

Jesus said "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."
(John 15:13)

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

(John 10:14-15)