

Small Group Discussion Outline



This is the third in a series of studies looking at the subject of Christian Friendship.



1 Kings 19 (Whole Chapter)



What's the best way to find friends?

It can be lonely when you move and leave friends behind, or a friend at work gets a different job. Or perhaps your small group changes, or your PTA group moves on. While you maintain contact, it's never quite the same.

Elijah was led to a friend in one of the worst moments of his life. He was running scared and wanted to die. God ministered to him in several ways, giving him food, rest, an intimate encounter with Himself, and a few jobs to do. Elijah found his friend in the most unusual place—within one of those jobs. His friend was, in fact, Elisha, his replacement.

The best way to find friends is to look to God.

You can do the same thing as Elijah — lay your loneliness out before God. What's going on that you don't understand? What do you need to get through rough times? God may lead you to a group or person to help you. He may ask you to serve within a cause or a ministry that needs you. There, you'll most likely find people you have something in common with.

They may be different in some ways (Elijah was much older than Elisha), but nevertheless, a camaraderie can grow that becomes vital in your life.

Good Words to Remember:

Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD of hosts."

1 Kings 19:13, 14



In what practical ways can you reach out to make a new friend?



2 Corinthians 2:14-17



What's the best way to find friends?

For many people, coming to Christ is a gradual process. They hear a few words about Jesus and like what they hear. They read a brief passage of Scripture, and it "rings true" to them. They meet a person who is a Christian and long for that added something to their life.

In this section of his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul said Christians are like perfume (2:15, 16). But not everyone likes that scent. Some people even think it stinks. But for those who are "being saved," the fragrance of Christian faith is like a magnet.

What is the Best Way to Find Friends?
Friendship

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These people are ready for a Christian friend who God can use to continue to draw that person into his family.

We all tend to gravitate toward people who are like us (similar educational, economic, and religious backgrounds), but such a narrow understanding of relationship isn't what Paul had in mind. He saw Christians as people who lead others "to life" (2:16).



**How can you tell if your friend is "being saved"?
Will all of your friends reach this point of being open to God?**

It is quite possible that not all our friends will ever come to the place of entering a relationship with God, however, that call is not ours to make. One way to ensure we are doing everything we can to 'prepare the soil' is to live our life in open gratitude to God in front of everyone. If you are, you'll be the sweet smell of perfume that God intends you to be. And those whom God is calling to faith will be drawn to you because of your example—the best basis for friendship anyway!

Good Words to Remember:

*We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.
To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.*
2 Corinthians 2:15, 16



Revelation 7:9-12



What's the best way to find friends?

Good friends are like comfortable old shoes. They mold to the shape of your feet. They're like you. So it's tempting to look for friends who are similar to you in surface ways: someone who's about the same age, not too much richer or poorer, who lives near you, who has common interests. It helps if the kids are at the same stage as yours or if they're at the same life-stage as you. They should have fun doing the same things you like. And of course they should speak the same language!

But a scene from heaven might help you rethink those requirements for friendship. Jesus allowed John a glimpse into heaven. And what he found there was astounding. First, he saw people from every tribe of Israel. But after that he saw an even larger crowd, "a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" (7:9). They were all wearing white robes. (Their sins had been washed away.) And they were all doing the same thing—praising God. Even the angels and the heavenly elders knelt down and joined in their praise.

If you'll be a part of such a diverse body in heaven, you may as well get started on it now. The rich diversity of God's people will enrich your own life and prepare you for eternity.

Good Words to Remember:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.
Revelation 7:9



**How diverse are your friends?
What are some ways you might gain more diverse friends?**

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