



Cultivating Community

“Friendship”

Galatians 5:25-6:5

Sunday, November 4, 2018

1. Sunday Summary: This Sunday we looked at a practice of cultivating community that we don't often think of as a practice: Friendship. We don't think of it that way, but ancient peoples certainly did, and so does the Bible. From Elijah and Elisha, to David and Jonathan, to the Disciples and Jesus, we see throughout the Bible that friendship takes on an intentional, and sometimes-covenantal shape. In fact, the Greek word for the love that's necessary for friendship (*philon*) is said to be the most deliberate of the four loves. Friendship is a decision we make over and over, every day.

Our passage showed us that friendship is something that we need to practice toward the whole Christian community. But, there are levels of friendship, and we will not know every person in the church as well as we know some others. Still, there are two practices of friendship that are essential on every level: 1) Dependability 2) Accountability.

- 1) Dependability – A friend is someone you can count on; someone who will help you to carry your burdens, even if it costs them. We often don't want to help others carry their burdens, because it's draining and we often have enough of our own. But, friends need to be there for each other. If you never burden yourself with your friend's burdens, you might not be a friend (or at least not a very good one).
- 2) Accountability – We are called in this passage to gently restore those who are stuck in their sins. Friends sometimes need to say the hard things to each other. This isn't a license to go around pointing out every flaw our friends have, or sins they commit. This is about discerning our friend's blind spots, and gently (if painfully) helping to come to grips with those internal places that are not yet fully yielded to Christ. And it's essential we do this without a hint of arrogance, or we'll also be caught in sin. It's difficult, but essential, that we do this with each other. And that's how real friendship always is – hard, but so necessary.

2. Connecting Questions: (Interactive, life sharing, thought & feeling type stuff)

- Talk about your best friend growing up. Why were you friends? Did you ever make a pact with them (think of “blood brothers”)? Kids seem to naturally, almost inherently, know that friendship is intentional, and even covenantal. Have you ever experienced that level of bonded-ness with a friend as an adult? If so, talk about that. If not, talk about why that might be.
- Talk about how you feel about becoming friends with the whole body of Christ. Does that scare you? Pastor Mike suggested that there are levels of friendship. Do you think it's possible to practice dependability and accountability with someone who is on the lowest “rung” of the “friendship ladder?” How might you do it?

- Talk about how Cornerstone Church would feel if everyone were really and truly friends. What would be different? What would remain the same? How far are we from this dream?
- What insights from today's message were most helpful for you?

3. Truth Questions: (What does the Bible say?)

- Think together about some other passages that deal with Friendship. Can you think of any? Talk about them.
- Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4 and chapter 20. What do you notice about Jonathan and David's friendship? What's the price of their friendship? What does each of them sacrifice?
- Read John 15:9-17. What do we learn about friendship from this passage? Christ calls the disciples his friends in this passage (which also extends to us if we are his disciples). How do the practices of dependability and accountability apply to our friendship with Christ?

4. Formation Questions: (Taking it further, How does the Truth change the way I live?)

- What concrete steps can you make to sink the gospel truth that we dealt with today deeper into your life throughout this week? What will you do about the message you heard today?
- Think of one person that you struggle with at church (someone you would say is not really your kind of person). How will you apply the practices of friendship to that person this week, or this month? What can you do?

5. Resources for Further Study:

1. Peterson, Eugene H., *Leap Over a Wall: Earthy Spirituality for Everyday Christians*. (Harper One, New York, New York. 1996. Chapter 5 *Friendship: David and Jonathan*, pgs. 47-58).
2. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/true-friends-are-hard-to-find>

