

What is a friend?

*Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend
forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*
(Job 6:14)

*A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time of adversity.*
(Proverbs 17:17)

I have several hundred Facebook friends. That certainly says something about the life that I've lived to this point, and I am grateful for each and every one of them. But I think we need a new term. My Facebook friends aren't really friends.

I realize this is a touchy area and I am not trying to denigrate social media (okay, maybe I am). But of all my Facebook "friends," I see only a small handful regularly. Many live in other parts of the world. If I was in trouble and needed to get in touch with a friend, how many of their phone numbers would I have? And if I called, how many of them would come?

Part of the problem is that the virtual world has marginalized our communication. Zoom and Facetime have normalized talking to one another through a screen, but what do we do with the urge to touch someone we care about? For most people a phone call is an intrusion. "Just text me," they say. But what if we need to look one another in the eye? What if you are in desperate need and I can't tell because I have no access to your facial expressions or body language?

I am not advocating for the abolition of Facebook. Facebook provides a way for us to keep in touch with old friends and relatives, it's a great platform for groups (my HOA has a Facebook page), and at this point it is ubiquitous.

What I am saying is that the church has something social media will never have: a source of real-live, flesh and blood connections. At City, we hope to facilitate relationships that go way beyond "Hi, how are you?" all the way to "No matter what you are facing, I will not let you go though it alone."

The Biblical term for that is "friend."

Pray

Jesus, before you laid your life down for us you said that this type of self-sacrifice would be the new standard for spiritual friendships (John 15:13). Give me friends that are willing to lay their lives down for me, and make me a friend who lays his life down for others—not metaphorically, but every day by my actions. Amen.



Tuesday, January 16th

RECURRING NEEDS

Revival
Repentance
Wisdom
Marriages
Families
Sick/Grieving
Depression/Mental illness
City Church
Church leaders
Children
Youth
Singles
Senior citizens
Volunteers
Teachers and support staff
Emergency personnel
Business community
Elected officials
Missionaries
Worldwide church
The lost

REFLECTIONS
