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# Friendship

*A friend loves at all times. (Proverbs 17:17)*



**Article by** Nancy Fujii  
Founder and Teacher, L.I.G.H.T. Kingdom Kids®

## Understanding Friendship

People experience friendship through mutual trust and self-sacrificing love. Friends are genuinely concerned about and interested in each other, allowing two people to give and receive, be vulnerable, and share honest thoughts and feelings without fear of

judgment. They share common interests, beliefs, or values, standing side-by-side, united by a cause.

When God transforms our hearts, allowing us to love others the way He loves us, we are about as close as we can get to the likeness of Christ, reflecting the selfless love Christ showed us. Friends stand united when they believe in Jesus, with their souls blending into one, just as God and Jesus are one (John 10:30).

Friends are there for each other through good and bad times, journeying together and growing closer to God. They share laughter, tears, and memories. Friends share in our joy and comfort us in our sorrows. We should cherish and nurture friendship. Genuine friends are hard to find but worth holding onto once found.

### **Managing Forgiveness**

Friend relationships can be challenging to manage because few people have ever experienced genuine friendship. Self-centered people don't care about other people in the same way Jesus did. They often reject others because of their appearance, status, or past. Jesus showed us how to welcome everyone with kindness and respect, even the ones others rejected.

Genuine friends appreciate each other for their true selves. They don't judge each other based on money, looks, or personal history. A real friend will love and accept us for who we are, not for what we can give. They share an emotional connection and involvement in each other's lives.

In the Old Testament, we see friendships as a covenant, symbolizing an unbreakable bond. Jesus shows us a friendship involving a willingness to sacrifice for the well-being of the other. One reason Jesus' teachings were hard to understand was that He brought a reality that most had never known.

### **Practice Jesus' Teachings**

Meaningful friendships take time and effort to nurture and grow with a commitment to an intentional and sincere investment in the life of another. Though losing friends is hurtful, divine love will heal our hearts. Our most incredible privilege in life is to experience intimate friendship with Jesus and unite with others to follow Him. We can think of Jesus as a friend, but it's important to understand what that means.

Like a loyal friend, Jesus shows great love and care for us. However, unlike our friendships with others, our friendship with Jesus is not about mutual give-and-take. Instead, we experience Jesus' friendship through His love and sacrifice for us and His revelation of who God is, which allows us access to His wisdom and everything He learned from His Father (John 17:7-8).

We can show we are Jesus' friends by following His teachings and commands. Friendship with Jesus characterizes the Christian life. In John 15:14, Jesus tells us He considers us His friends if we follow His commands. We are to obey Him and communicate with Him through prayer. This friendship is the foundation for living fully aligned with God's will. Jesus' unconditional love for us and guidance make Him the best friend we could ever have.

### **Connect**

Share your meaningful friendship relationships with your child and explain why you value them. Help them see how God can unite friends, making their bond solid and everlasting. Share when a friend was there for you in good times and bad. Ask your child to think of someone they could show kindness toward, expecting nothing in return. Help them see that could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

### **Teach**

Friendship is a strong bond between two people who discover they share a common interest. Friends make life more fulfilling and help us grow. Friendship is about mutual love and support, helping others grow in faith, and sharing Jesus. Friends keep us from being lonely and are a natural part of life.

### **Model**

Model for your child how friendships help us see Jesus in each other and how we can work together to share His story with the world. This could be as simple as you and a friend taking your child to a park, restaurant, or playdate where you and your friend extend kindness to strangers and each other. Explain how we should always want the best for our friends and protect them from harm. Model for your child how your friend brings you joy, comfort, and a sense of belonging.



## Prayer

Father, thank you for the gift of friendship. Help me to choose friends with wisdom. Teach me to be loyal to my friends and listen carefully to their needs so I can be there to help them. Protect me when my friends hurt me, and I want to walk away or say or do something unkind and unloving. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Scripture

A friend loves at all times. (Proverbs 17:17)

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)