

Formative Practice Guide: Befriend

Read John 15:12-17

“What a friend we have in Jesus,” as the hymn goes! He bears our burdens, loves us unconditionally, and helps us with our every need. As we grow in our understanding of Jesus’ friendship with us, we will grow in being a friend to others.

Spiritual Exercises:

Plan time in your upcoming schedule to include the following exercises in your routine.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that Christians “should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the word of God” (*Life Together*). Practice reflective listening this week. “Reflecting” can be as simple as repeating back key emotions or details you heard shared, or summarizing what was said in a way that honors the other person’s experience. Doing this shows that you are listening and invites deeper connection.

Do you have a friend who you trust to correct you in love when you sin? If you do, reach out and give them specific permission to do so. If not, spend some time praying, asking the Lord if there’s someone in your life who you could take a next step of vulnerability with (whether that’s sharing your story, asking for prayer, planning a hangout, etc.).

We can learn so much about God through people whose backgrounds and experiences are different from our own. Seek out opportunities to befriend someone of a different age, ethnic background, religion, etc., not as a box to check, but in order to know and love them well, and to know and love Jesus more, too.

Guided Reflection:

Reflect on these concepts throughout your day. Feel free to also set aside some distraction-free time for more intentional reflection.

Set aside time this week to read about the friendships of Jonathan and David (*1 Samuel 18-20*) and Ruth and Naomi (*Ruth 1:1-18*). Reflect, journal, or make a list of the characteristics of each friendship. How do these characteristics reflect the friend we have in Jesus? What characteristics do you see reflected in your own friendships?

Draw a timeline of your life, broken into 5-year segments. Write down the friends most important to you in each segment. What aspects of each friendship are you thankful for? Are there any wounds you have from friendships? Take both your gratitude and hurt to the Lord in prayer.¹

Connecting the Practices

Jesus has saved us into a community of believers, friends with whom we get to walk through different seasons of life. And most formative practices themselves can be done with friends, either side-by-side or by reflecting on them together.

¹ Adapted from the [Spiritual Disciplines Handbook](#) by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun