

## 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 13th**

## 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

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