

FRESH

OUTLOOK
BIBLE STUDIES

FRIENDSHIP

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THE PRESBYTERIAN OUTLOOK



Session 1 Loneliness

Leader prep:

Watch [“America Suffers a Loneliness Epidemic”](#); [“The Belonging Process: Connecting with America’s Loneliest Generation”](#); [“Covenant Friendship”](#)

Read [“Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: Key Takeaways”](#); [“Social Connection”](#); [“With A Little Help from My Friends \(Remastered 2009\)”](#); [“Why Friendship Is Different Than Any Other Relationship We Have”](#); [“F Is for Friendship: A Theological Dictionary”](#);

[“New Surgeon General Advisory Raises Alarm about the Devastating Impact of the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in the United States”](#)

Supplies:

Media clips, equipment to play them
Nametags, markers
Blank newsprint, markers
Tape
Candle, lighter
Newsprint prepared with [Proverbs 18:24](#)
Bibles or Bible app

1. Welcome

Play [“With A Little Help from My Friends \(Remastered 2009\)”](#) as people enter the space. Encourage participants to wear nametags.

Welcome everyone to the group for a four-session examination of biblical friendship.

Ask the participants to form pairs and discuss the following:

- How has your process for choosing and making friends changed over the years?
- What is your favorite way to be a friend?
- What two or three words describe your ideal friend?

Introduce yourself and share your hopes and expectations for today’s session. Invite each participant to introduce themselves, their hopes for the session and their responses to the discussion questions.

After everyone has shared, summarize what you heard. Post on newsprint the most common ideas about friendship.

candle, lighter
prepared newsprint,
tape

2. Meditation and prayer

Light a candle to signify entering a moment of silence.

Guide the participants through several slow inhales and exhales.

Post the newsprint featuring the text of [Proverbs 18:24](#). Take a moment to reflect in silence on the proverb.

After sufficient time, transition into a moment of responsive prayer. Encourage those who feel comfortable to name friendship qualities that help friends stay close. After each person speaks, lead the group in the following response:

Leader: May it be so.

All: Amen.

After everyone has had an opportunity to speak, say the following prayer:

Holy God, show us how to be faithful friends. Help us help one another develop qualities of friendship. Be with us as our relationships change and evolve. Amen.

media clip,
equipment

3. Loneliness and intimacy

Talking point: In 2022, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, the United States Surgeon General, announced that loneliness has become America’s most significant health problem. He stated that almost 50% of adults in the country experience feelings of isolation, which further deteriorates their mental health. The problem is not necessarily the low number of friendships but a lack of intimacy. Many people confess to not being noticed, named or known.

Show the YouTube video [“The Belonging Process: Connecting with America’s Loneliest Generation”](#) (2:09). Invite participants to respond to the video.

Discuss:

- Where in your relationships do you encounter intimacy (that is, being noticed, named and known)?
- How does lack of intimacy between friends lead to loneliness?
- What kinds of commitments must we make to develop intimacy with friends? Vulnerability? Reliability? What else?

media clip, equipment
Bibles or Bible app

4. David and Jonathan

Talking point: The biblical story of Jonathan and David reveals an intimate friendship, described as a covenant of loyalty, trust and sacrificial love “Covenant” is a common theme in biblical friendships, in which friends promise to stand with one another, protect one another and be led together by their faith in God.

Ask volunteers to portray David, Jonathan, Saul and a narrator. Ask them to read aloud [1 Samuel 18:1-5, 20:16-17](#).

Discuss:

- Describe David and Jonathan’s friendship. What characteristics stand out?
- Where in the story of Jonathan and David do you see intimacy (being noticed, named and known)?
- Why is their friendship described as a covenant?

media clip,
equipment

5. Covenant Friendship

Show the YouTube video [“Covenant Friendship”](#) (4:55). Invite participants to respond to the video.

Discuss:

- What does the idea of covenant add to friendship?
- What is the connection between covenant and intimacy (being noticed, named and known)?
- Have you ever experienced a friendship that resembled a covenant? Explain.

blank newsprint,
markers,
tape

6. Discerning the signs of Babylon today

Lead the group to make a covenant that can nurture intimate friendships among the participants over the next four weeks.

Ask:

- What do we want to promise one another to cultivate our friendships?
- How will we cultivate an environment so that each person is noticed, named and known?

Write down the group’s covenant on a newsprint sheet and post it in your gathering place during each session of the study. Seal the covenant in prayer:

Dear God, guide us as we reflect on our friendships and faith. Help us keep our promises to each other. Amen.

media clip,
equipment

7. Closing prayer

Pose the following to the group:

This week, try to find ways to be a supportive and faithful friend to those around you. Do you know anyone who might be feeling low or disheartened? Can you think of a way to assist them during their challenging phase? Seek guidance from the Holy Spirit to help you serve the needs of those struggling.

Lead everyone in silent breathing. Then lead a simple breath prayer, as follows:

**Breathe in God’s love for you . . .
Breathe out God’s love for each other.
Breathe in God’s love for you . . .
Breathe out God’s love for friends.
Breathe in God’s love for you . . .
Breathe out God’s love for the world.**

End the session with Christ’s peace.

The peace of Christ be with you.

Invite the participants to respond:

And also with you.

Invite the participants to mingle and share signs of Christ’s peace with one another.

Before the next session, text or email each participant the “5 Minutes in Church History” podcast episode titled [“Augustine on Friendship”](#) (5:00), with the following introduction:

Talking Point: St. Augustine was a Christian philosopher and theologian who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries CE. He believed that friendship is the most profound form of love. While listening to the clip, reflect on Augustine’s idea that the only faithful way for Christians to love their friends is in Jesus.