



## Dear Friends,

When I preached on David and Jonathan's friendship last month, I decided to ask a few close male friends for their thoughts about friendship. I thought they were qualified for the task on the basis that they had proven to be good friends to me.

I asked for their advice because I benefit from the wisdom of fellow Christians. I also wanted their insights because men don't seem to have as many friends as women, and our friendships don't tend to be as deep. So, I want to encourage Christian men to invest in male friendships and to do them well.

Here is a sample of the wisdom my mates shared with me:

### Good friends listen

*For me, good friendship has a lot to do with being heard. A good friend listens well. They surrender time and space to draw out your thoughts and reflections and are not in a hurry to impose their own. They ask good questions that foster and facilitate sharing and can expose deeper realities that the person may not even have been aware of themselves. Being heard is to be loved, and so listening is loving. A good friend loves.*

### Two kinds of friendships

*The first kind are peripheral friendships – "I like you and we have a lot in common". These friendships form quickly out of common interests that form easily and quickly...but are not necessarily deep, trusting and long lasting. I like being with these friends and doing what we enjoy in our common. The investment and commitment to these friendships is light and easy.*

*The second kind are deep trusting friendships – "I trust you, depend on you and willing to share anything with you." These friendships are deep and personal built on strong trust. That trust is usually developed over many years...forged in fire...through tough and good times. I connect immediately with these friends even if we haven't met for a long time. Such friends are open to sharing their most personal struggles and challenges.*

### Qualities of important friendships

*As I reflect on the most important friendships to me these are the words that resonate most: unconditionality, forgiveness, mutual respect, being each other's biggest fans, grace, generosity regarding the other's shortcomings, loving truth telling.*

### Loyalty is basic to Friendship

*Loyalty is very significant (you see that in Jonathan and David). Flowing out of that comes trust which is the foundation of a good friendship. It allows you to be honest and transparent. That in turn makes all the attributes of Christian relationship easier - forgiveness, kindness, and compassion (Eph 4:32); speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15); speaking to build up (Eph 4:29).*

### Prioritising Friendship

*I have some regrets about not being a good friend. I am challenged about a number of once close friends who I have lost contact with over the years. The main thing about friends is keeping contact; being there for each other. Too many times I have failed in that. And I need to do better.*

What kind of friend are you? Do you prioritise friendship? Do you listen well? Are you loyal and trustworthy? Does the gospel of grace, truth and love shape your friendships?

God Bless,  
Mark Adams