

Friendship As A Spiritual Practice

“Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life...”

–Romans 16:3-4

Open your Bible to Romans 16 and read vs.1-16

- These verses are easily overlooked in Paul’s most famous letter. They are viewed as insignificant by some as compared to the rich theology in earlier parts of the letter. But we can learn a lot about Paul in this chapter. Don’t quickly pass it over.
- Read Romans 16:1-16 again. What do I discover about Paul?
- Notice how he describes his many colleagues. What words does he use?
- If I were to make a list of some of the significant people in my life, whom would I include? What words would I use to describe them? Make such a list. What do I learn about my friendships from this list?

Review

Open your retreat guidebook to the “Morning Day Three” section, the lesson on Friendship as a Spiritual Practice. Read through the pages of this section again. Review your notes.

- What stays with me from this section?
- What steps have I taken since the retreat to move a person from the “traditional friendship” circle to the “soul friendship” circle?

Exercise

- Turn to pg.58 in your retreat guidebook. Review Adele Calhoun’s description of a soul friend.
- Who in my life fits, or perhaps can potentially fit, this description?
- How can I intentionally move to being this kind of soul friend to another?
- What will I do this very week to move deeper into a soul friendship?

Reflection

The executives I work with when they last made a real friend.

They get quiet. Almost without fail, the names they come up with are people they haven't seen in twenty years—old roommates, or people they knew before the striving started...

There is a lie strivers tell themselves about friendship, and the lie sounds reasonable: "I'm in a sprint right now. There will be time for real friends later." I've heard versions of this from people in their twenties through their fifties. The essence never changes; only the "later" get pushed further.

But friendship doesn't work the way the striver imagines. The people who become your friends-for-life are the people you accumulate time with—through the moves, the boring Tuesdays, the bad years. You can't fast-forward to them. You can't acquire them at fifty-five the way you acquire a second home...

Friendship compounds, and so does its absence...

Do not wait for friendship to become convenient.

Pick up the phone and make the plans now.

—Arthur Brooks

Questions

1. What moves me the most about Brooks' words?
2. God designed us to need others. The Trinity reminds us that God in his very essence is a relationship. It's no wonder, then, as people made in his image, that we need relationships on this journey of faithfulness. So... who am I "accumulating time" with?

"There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship." —Augustine



Book recommendation:

Spiritual Friendship, by Mindy Caliguire