

I Belong to Friendship

Questions for Covenant Groups Week of August 27-September 2

Hosts – this week begins a three-part series honing in on what it means to be a “member” of Friendship Community Church.

Here are the verses you need to be prepared to share this week: 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Luke 7:33-50; Luke 15:1-2; Luke 5:27-32; Luke 19:1-10; John 15:12-15

Say, We begin a three part series asking, What does it mean to **Belong at Friendship Community Church** and this week Michael helped redirect/redefine the term of friendship not in a modern interpretation of just person to person, but God as a friend to us.

Ask, who was your first “best friend?” How do you tend to choose your friends now that you’re an adult?

Say, Michael talked about Buddy Jesus and the thought that Jesus hung out with sinners and was more of a buddy okay with their sin rather than the One who would judge their sin.

Ask, what do you think about that statement? **Say**, many of us are good with Jesus being a friend to all no matter what but this week’s sermon introduction pointed to the fact that Jesus is coming back to judge.

Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and allow these verses to help set the stage for the fact that Jesus is coming as Judge not just as a buddy to sinners. (Do spend a great amount of time in these verses but it is important to read them to set the tone for the study.)

Say, Sometimes God uses crisis, friendships, family or even a stranger to begin the process of drawing us to Himself. He uses many things that will begin to cause us to seek Him. And, when we begin to ask/seek spiritual things, it is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit since we do not come to know Christ on our own.

Say, The first point of the sermon is Jesus is a friend of **seeking** sinners. (those who were drawn to Him – Read Luke 15:1-2) The religious leaders were insulting Jesus by saying that He was friend of sinners but Jesus just used their attempt to harm His reputation to draw more people to Himself.

Ask, How were you drawn to Him? or How may He be drawing you even now? (allow time for participants to respond)

The second point is Jesus is a friend of **listening** sinners. Read Luke 5:27-32

Say, the calling of Levi is more than just a casual invitation. Follow me means get up now, leave everything, and commit to Christ’s way. Many times we listen but begin to waver when the "calling gets tough." An easy call is not a call to follow Christ.

Ask, What are some voices (idols) that can easily trap you?

Ask, How have you seen God give you victory by hearing His voice and obeying Him?

The third point is Jesus is a friend of **repentant** sinners. Read Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus) Summarize this: Jesus was passing through Jericho but as he was passing through He was willing to stop what He was doing and focus on those who were drawn to Him, willing to listen, and repent of their sin. He even went to Zach’s house!

Say, repentance is one of things/actions that we are quick to want others to do but not so quick to jump into ourselves. Without repentance there is no forgiveness of sins. It is a vital step in our journey to follow Christ.

Ask, are there things you need to repent of in your life right now?

Say, Our fourth point is that Jesus is a friend of **believing** sinners. Read John 15:12-15

Ask, what are some things or who is a person that you believe in? What is evidence that leads you to believe that Christ is who He says He is? (Be sensitive to those who may have questions about believing Christ.)

Say, We are no longer slaves but friends and He calls those friends who do what He says.

Say, Finally, Michael mentioned that Jesus is a friend of **respectable** sinners and **disreputable** sinners. **Shiny and shady sinners.**

Say, whether shiny or shady, sinners are just that, sinners and all of us are apart from God at some time in our lives.

Say, Jesus is not your drinking buddy, cussing buddy, shacking up buddy or cheating on your taxes buddy but He is your friend for those who are seeking, listening, repenting and believing. He is the friend of shady and shiny sinners. He is the Son of God who came to deliver you from your sin and for us to follow Him. And we are one of the two sinners on either side of the cross; one of them is with Jesus forever.

Give people a chance to respond and share prayer requests. Close in prayer thanking God that He is a friend of sinners but He is not Buddy Jesus which is really no friend at all that would allow us to wallow in our sin.