



Discussion Guide

Date: 10/12/2025

Sermon Title: Do I really need friends?

Scripture: Hebrews 10:23-25

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, you have made us for relationship—with You and with one another. As we gather in Your name, open our hearts to the truth of Your Word, and help us to see the beauty and strength in shared life and faith. Teach us to encourage one another and to find joy in the gift of Christian friendship. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Do you have a good friend, some who blesses you, someone who fills you up, someone who encourages you? Share who it is and the nature of the relationship?

Digging into the Word:

Read aloud: Hebrews 10:23-25 (NRSV) and a few other versions if you or group have them.

1. What do you hear when you read in vs 23 “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering”? What is the “confession of our hope”? How might friends in faith help us hold on to hope?
2. The text urges us to “provoke one another to love and good deeds.” Where do we witness harmful provoking? What does that kind of “provoking” in Hebrews look like in life?
3. Can you share a time when someone encouraged you to do good in a way that shaped your faith?
4. Verse 25 warns against “neglecting to meet together.” Why do you think gathering was so important to early Christians? What makes gathering hard today—and what makes it worth it?
5. The passage ends with a note about “encouraging one another” as we await Christ’s return. How does a shared community help us live faithfully in a world that often feels uncertain?

Wesleyan Insight:

John Wesley believed that Christian community was essential to growing in holiness. He wrote, “Holy solitaires is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.”

- John Wesley, Preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739)

1. How does Wesley’s phrase “social holiness” challenge the idea that faith is only a private matter?

2. In Wesley's class meetings and bands, Christians were held together by accountability, prayer, and mutual support. Where do you experience (or long for) this kind of depth in your own faith relationships?

Other scriptures to consider:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Acts 2:42-47; Galatians 6:2

1. How do these verses affirm the need for friendship and community in the life of faith?
2. Where do you see yourself reflected (or challenged) in these pictures of spiritual friendship?

Sermon Questions:

1. Pastor Clayton mentions William Arthur Ward's proverb, "The spice of life is to befriend." How has friendship enriched your life? Share an experience where a friendship made a significant difference.
2. How has friendship within your faith community helped you 'hold fast to hope' during difficult times? Can you share an experience where friends from church supported you through a challenging period?
3. The sermon references this story: In our four Gospels, there is the story of friends and the paralytic. Reflecting on the story of friends bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus, how can we be those kinds of friends who go to extraordinary lengths to help others encounter Christ?
4. How might our use of social media and consumption of news change if we focused on 'stirring up love' rather than divisiveness? What practical steps could we take to shift this dynamic?
5. The sermon discusses the power of encouragement. Can you recall a time when someone's encouragement significantly impacted your journey of faith or life direction?

Applying it:

1. How can we cultivate deeper friendships within our church community, especially in an age where loneliness is described as an 'epidemic'?
2. What if our lives were more loving, doing good, and helping others? How do we get out of the negative and celebrate what is right in our world and serve others?

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for calling us into a community where we are known, loved, and encouraged. Teach us how to be present with one another in authentic friendship and to see these relationships as sacred gifts from You. Help us not to neglect one another but to build each other up in love. May our friendships reflect the heart of Christ and become places where Your grace is made real. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Take some time to reflect on your friendships. Are there any that need nurturing? Make a plan to reach out to a friend you haven't connected with in a while.
2. This week, intentionally encourage at least three people in your life. This could be through a phone call, text message, or in-person interaction.
3. Review your recent social media activity. How can you adjust your online presence to be more encouraging and unifying?
4. Pair up with someone in the group and commit to praying for each other regularly over the next week or month.