

Being a Friend

Scripture Reading — Proverbs 18

An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends ... But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:1, 24 —

Think of the ways God could have saved us. He could have dazzled and overpowered us; he could have convinced us with absolute proof. Why didn't God do that?

Well, as we can see even in the unusual case of Enoch (Genesis 5:24), God prefers to save us through the dignity of friendship. God befriends the lost. When guilty Adam and Eve hid themselves in the bushes, the Creator didn't first tranquilize them from afar. He walked out to them in the cool of the day, like a friend looking for a friend. Jesus Christ is the ultimate friend who sticks "closer than a brother."

But now Christ invites us to practice the same selfless friendship with those who need his love. Recently I sat in a pastry shop drinking blueberry tea with an old acquaintance. For decades he has resisted committing his life to Christ, and yet he admits that he recently lost his sense of direction. After listening to him share his disappointments, I invited him to talk to God about helping with his next steps. He didn't immediately take me up on the offer, but I will not abandon our relationship, for God's love reaches out to this person, and I'm a part of that.

Too often we take pride that all our friends love Jesus. Perhaps it's time to enlarge our friendship circle. Is there someone who needs the kind of grace-filled friendship that Proverbs celebrates?

Prayer

Holy Spirit, lead us to people who are strangers to your love. We offer to you the time and energy to befriend them. Amen.

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