

Friends

Scripture Reading — John 15:9-17

"I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends." John 15:15 —

I had been a supervisor at the bank for seven years when the corporation decided that several other supervisors and I needed to go to corporate headquarters to be properly trained in dealing with our "subordinates." The 24-year-old instructor, just out of university, opened our training session with these words: "The most important thing to realize about your relationships with those staff members who report to you is that you can never, ever be their friend."

Later, when I became a pastor, I heard nearly identical words of advice about ministry. "Your vocation sets you apart. Be careful not to let yourself be friendly with the members of your congregation; do not let anyone get too close to you."

In Jesus' day there were some people who could not believe he was the Messiah because of his friendships: they would sneer and call him a friend of sinners. That's what Jesus was--and each of us can be thankful for that.

This doesn't mean Jesus is content to leave us exactly as we are. "You are my friends if you do what I command," he says. Jesus' search for friends has a purpose: that his friends will go out and bear the fruit of bringing others into that same friendship relationship with Jesus. This is most likely to happen when his people love one another and share Jesus' friendship with each other.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, our Master, Teacher, Savior, and adoptive brother and friend--what a friend we have in you! Hear the praise of our prayers, and help us to show your love. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#)

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