

## Living Close - Friendship - Sept 8 of 2019 - Small Group Notes

- When has a relationship been key to your spiritual growth?
- Who has been significant to you in this way?
- How might our relationships help us, without us even realising it?

The series we are in now is called Spiritual Friendship from a term by the 12<sup>th</sup> century English monk named Aelred of Rievaulx. Aelred noticed that people have different types of friendships. Some categories he gives are:-

- carnal friendship - based on shared pursuit of pleasure
  - worldly friendship - based on mutual advantage
  - spiritual friendship - grounded in shared discipleship
- Are these the categories you would use when you look at your friendships?
  - Are there any categories that you would add to this?

There is great potency to Spiritual Friendship... where you have the shared goal of growing in your faith with someone that knows you. There are various elements to Spiritual Friendship that we will explore over these coming weeks.

**Today, to get us started, we will look at the friendship of David and Jonathan.**

- What things, can you think of, that make it difficult for people to have good, deep friendships?

When we think about what it means to have deep connections with others... there are so many ways things can go wrong...

- How do you help... the person who is too shy, the person who is overconfident and perhaps over talkative, and the person who has many friends but can't go deep with any of them? We all can get better at this!

We are relational beings, made for deep connection with others.

- What examples can you think of that show that this is true?

**David and Jonathan** - 4 aspects of their friendship... challenge your own heart with these...

## 1- Loved each other

Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4 - After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became **one in spirit** with David, and **he loved him as himself**.<sup>2</sup> From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house.<sup>3</sup> And Jonathan made a **covenant** with David because **he loved him as himself**.<sup>4</sup> Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

- What does it mean to be 'one in spirit' with someone?
- When have you experienced this, or seen this?

Three times, in these chapters, we hear the phrase 'he loved him as himself' (1 Samuel 18:1, 3, 20:17).

- When have you had this sort of love for another person?
- What makes it difficult to have this sort of friendship with another person?

## 2- Committed to each other

Read 1 Samuel 20:16-17- So Jonathan made a **covenant** with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account."

<sup>17</sup> And Jonathan **made David reaffirm his oath out of love for him**, because **he loved him as he loved himself**.

Read 1 Samuel 20:42- Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have **sworn friendship** with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants for ever.' " Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

This idea of 'sworn friendship' between two men as tough as David and Jonathan feels uncomfortable.

- Why is this uncomfortable?
- Why is this also something that is good?

Sometimes in friendship we cross the line between friend and family. By this I mean that a friendship somehow becomes permanent. How does this happen?

### 3- Carried each other

Read 1 Samuel 20:1-17 - Then David fled from Natioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?"

<sup>2</sup> "Never!" Jonathan replied. "You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without confiding in me. Why should he hide this from me? It's not so!"

<sup>3</sup> But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favour in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan said to David, "**Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you.**"

Remember the context at this point.

- Why does Saul want to kill David?
- In what ways might it be dangerous for Jonathan to help David?

And yet... David still comes to Jonathan for support and help.

### 4- Pointed each other to God

#### Pointed each other to God-

Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18- While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. <sup>16</sup> And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and **helped him to find strength in God.**

<sup>17</sup> "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You shall be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."

<sup>18</sup> The two of them **made a covenant** before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

Here Jonathan helped David 'find strength in God'.

- What might we do to help a friend in this way?

With David and Jonathan we see that they...

Loved each other, Were Committed to each other, Carried each other, and Pointed each other to God. We can all be better friends to others... perhaps the example of David and Jonathan can help us.