

THE
FRIEND
GUIDE

seven steps to finding your people

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A NOTE

from jennie

Making friends and keeping them can be really hard. But there's hope for us who know and love Jesus. When we seek Him, spend time with Him, and fix Him at the center of everything, even our friendships change. Now, when I say the word friend... what pops in your head?

If you're anything like me, you've rubbed up against some real friends or moved to a new place with long seasons of loneliness or you've been hurt deeply by someone you considered a friend. It is in these moments that we experience how sin has marred the way we relate to others.

Oh, how I wish we were doing this face to face over coffee because I would look you square in the eye and tell you: You were made for deep community. The world will tell you to find your own place, go it alone, be more independent, stop needing people. God's way is entirely different and the path to our thriving... and it's just flat out more fun!

Remember when friends were easy to come by as children? If someone happened to live in the same neighborhood, they instantly fell into the friend category. Proximity created friendship. Availability. Eagerness. It was as easy as ringing the doorbell and asking if our neighbors could come out and play. We didn't wait and hesitate and overthink. These life-giving, deep friendships are possible for us, and I want to fight for you to have them in your life! Here are some simple steps to becoming a better friend and finding healthy friendships. I'm cheering you on!

1. GO FIRST.

To have deep, true friendships, we must initiate. We need to be the friend we want others to be first. Do you want deeper friends? Do you feel left out? Quit waiting for people to initiate towards you. Start initiating. And maybe in being the ones to go first, people around us will feel the freedom to meet us halfway. We'll open up. Stop being afraid. Open up our homes. Impose ourselves upon people. Assume they want to be our friends. Need things from others and assume they want to help!

We lead independent lonely lives- and we don't want to bother people so we don't and we wonder why we don't have friends. Pick up pizza and pop by a friend's house tonight. If they are busy... worst case scenario- you have leftovers. Risk. Need. Bother. It's called community.

READ Acts 28

PRAY Lord, give me a spirit of boldness in telling people about the hope I have because of Jesus! Help me pursue people in friendship like you pursue us.

MOVE Make your neighbor run to the mall with you. Borrow the rake instead of Amazon prime it. Save a seat at church for someone. Swap childcare instead of hiring a sitter. Ask a friend to tag along to chemo with you. Tell someone you need a training partner for a race.

2. LISTEN AND ASK DEEP QUESTIONS.

Listening by definition is “making meaning from sound” or a “process of extraction”, but often times we’re listening to respond. Before a question has rolled off our tongue, we’re already thinking about how to respond to our friend’s answer. A good listener is willing to leave space for silence, set aside distractions, look people in the eye, let their opinions and follow up questions go, repeat back to people what they’ve heard them say for clarity. Listening helps us understand and love others.

READ

John 4

PRAY

God, help me be a better listener that remembers details. I trust you to give me good heart questions at the right time!

MOVE

Ask people the questions you wish they’d ask you. Don’t settle for shallow! Even if it feels unnatural or awkward at first, asking people deep, heart level questions will always make you better friends. Don’t settle for vague. Ask questions with true curiosity and care for someone’s story. Ask open-ended questions. Don’t assert your own experience or let your opinions guide your question asking.

3. TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN THEM.

Say it as soon as you think it. “I’m so grateful for that moment the other night when you handed me a paper towel at small group, you’re a thoughtful friend.” “Thanks for asking good questions.” “You challenge me to pray more and pray big.” This is a lost art! A good friend looks for God in your life and tells you where he/she sees Him showing up and changing you.

READ Colossians 1

PRAY Thank you God for showing me more of you through other people. Give me eyes to see the ways you’re moving in other people’s lives and the boldness to encourage them!

MOVE Look a new friend in the eye this week and tell them one way you see God in their life.

4. SHARE THE REAL STUFF.

We need to sidestep weird emotional barriers, wondering if we're too much, too pushy, terrible conversationalists. When I moved to a new city recently, I heard about this girl who everyone said was just awesome! So when we finally set a time to meet and go on a walk, I had two choices: 1. Curate a version of myself that didn't seem scattered or too flighty and polish my story to make her like me more. OR 2. Let her know and see the real me. We were instant friends and I didn't have to wonder if we really connected or not! The Bible asks us to tell the truth and this is a very real way we can walk in the light.

READ

Galatians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Proverbs 29:25

PRAY

God, convict me even in the middle of a conversation when I am presenting a false version of myself for the sake of impressing others! Help me seek your approval alone and not the approval of man.

MOVE

Next time you're with someone, commit to transparency in everything you say. Tell someone what you're struggling with this week even if it's uncomfortable.

5. TALK ABOUT JESUS.

What could matter more than this! When we're talking about Jesus and how He's moving in our lives, your friendships are built on something that lasts. We get to see God in others and He gets bigger and more beautiful to us. We don't take a single breath without Him so if your conversations are void of Jesus, it's essential that we ask ourselves why. Friendships that are saturated in Jesus leave no room for pettiness, gossip, and competition because you're each running in your lane and looking to please God alone.

READ John 15

PRAY God, I am nothing without you! May you be at the very center of every relationship in my life. Help me talk about you more and more.

MOVE Start a conversation with a friend by asking: "Who is Jesus?"

6. BE QUICK TO FORGIVE.

We hurt one another. We let one another down. We disagree. We are human and flawed—even those who know God. Accepting that fact allows me to have grace for every other person who comes into my life. If I can see that I am completely messed up and that God rescued and saved me from myself, and not because I did anything or deserved it, then there is freedom in my life to issue that same grace to everybody else. I am a rescued mess of a human, and so are you. And we will hurt one another sometimes because that is what jacked-up humans do. But we need each other. We keep running together even though we hurt one another. We have to pick our people and commit to them, expecting they will hurt us but not giving up easily on them when they do.

READ

Matthew 6, Colossians 3

PRAY

Lord, help me to forgive others quickly and completely as you have forgiven me.

MOVE

Consider where you might be holding any bitterness or resentment in your relationships. Pray. Then move towards reconciling with that person today.

7. IT'S OK TO ONLY HAVE A FEW.

It's impossible to invest in dozens of deep, intentional relationships. Every one of us has people in our lives whom we need and people who need us. Are we intentionally spending our time in those two categories? Or are we casually bumping up against each other with no real purpose to receive or give love? If we are honest, it is costly to love people. It is easier to survive this life on the surface, brushing up against people gently, rather than doing the mess of intentionally loving them. Love takes risk. Love takes forgiveness and grace. Love takes effort, time, and commitment. You commit not to bolt when it gets hard—because it will get hard. And if this is the cost of deep relationship, we just don't have capacity and space to go deep with everyone. So we have to become intentional with a few.

READ

Proverbs 18:24

PRAY

God, help me discern what friends you have for me in this season, and help me pour into them without hesitation.

MOVE

Consider which friendships you need to commit more fully to and let them know.

CONSIDER

What are 5 ways you could develop the relationships you need in your life this week?

Who are your mission-minded, like-minded friends?

Who are the people who make you love God more?

Who can you safely share your soul with?

Who are wise mentors you could pursue?

PEOPLE YOU NEED

people you need

plan for time together

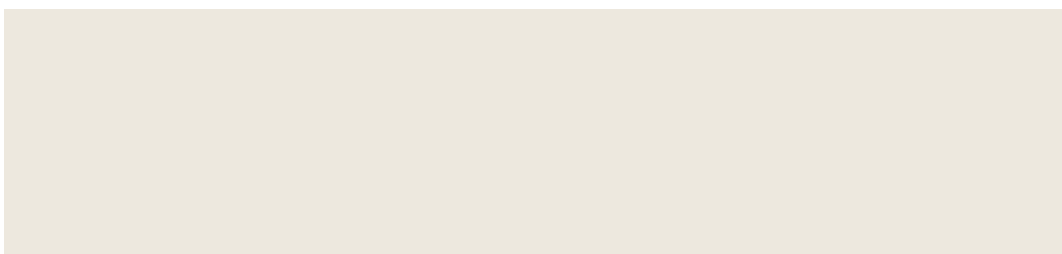
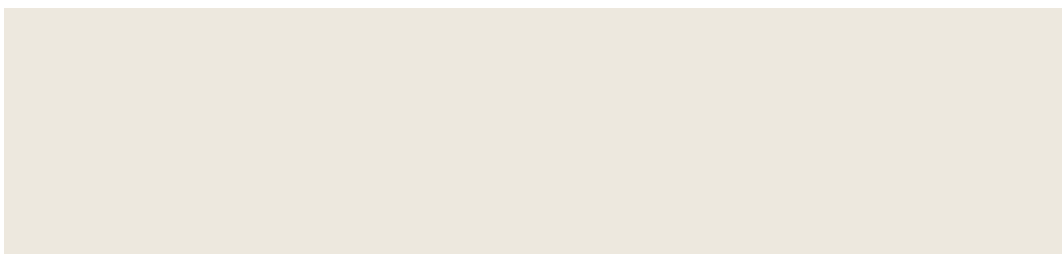
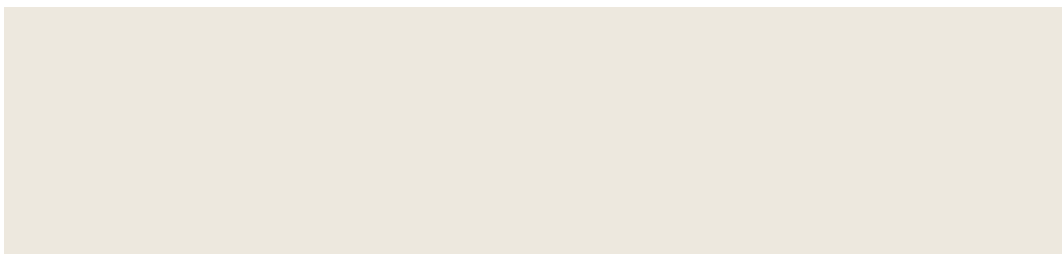
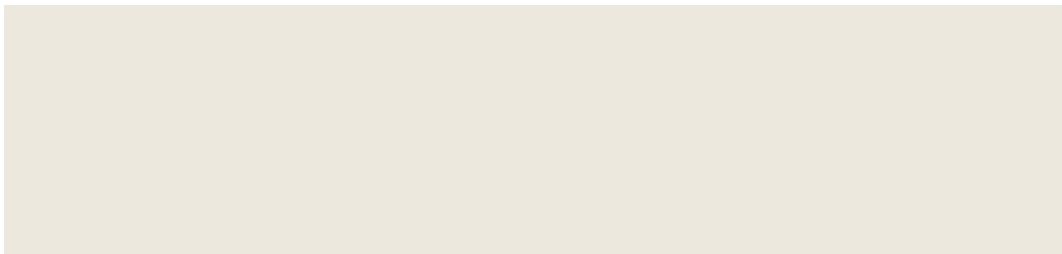
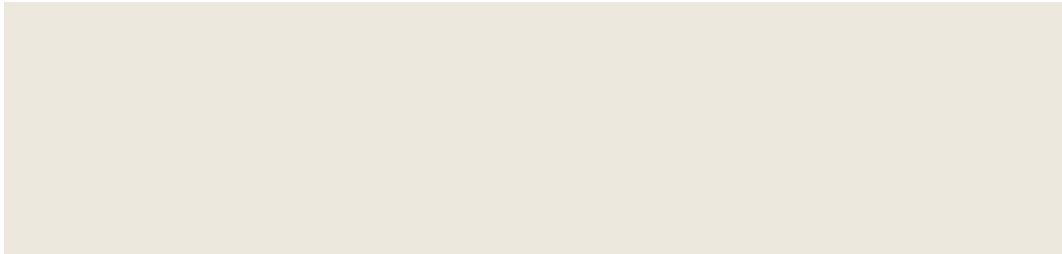
PEOPLE WHO NEED YOU

people who need you

plan for time together

TELL THEM

**Who are your top 5 people?
What are you grateful for in them?**



ACQUAINTANCES

VILLAGE
a diverse community
of consistent,
interconnected people

but we're
skipping this

this is what
we want

**2-5 CLOSE
FRIENDS**



PEOPLE WEB

1. Identify places and spaces in your life (examples: church, school, work, neighborhood, etc.) and write them in the circles
2. Think of all the people within each space that you interact with, then think about it in terms of friendship and who you really want to invest in. Write up to 4 names in the boxes below each space.
3. Now, take it a step further, pray over these names and circle 3-5 people on the whole page to pursue deep relationships with.

* Reference Chapter 5 in "Find Your People"

FINDING A WAY TO

serve together

activity

time spent

_____ hours

_____ hours

_____ hours

_____ hours

_____ hours

_____ hours

_____ hours

FINDING A WAY TO serve together

**In view of your God-given purpose to love others into eternity,
what does this list reveal about where you need to:**

Add (Do you have a significant amount of margin?)

Subtract (Are you too busy for people?)

Invite + include (How can you intentionally build your
close friends and purposeful interactions into your week?)

**Hopefully you're building traction with a few people you want to
continue on with. Or maybe you still don't see a lot of potential.
If so, you might invite new friends to join you in a specific activity.
Either way, put yourself out there with a few people
and trust the process.**