

Friendly Relating To One Another In Christ

- I. Christians have a ministry one to another.
 - A. We are to be "...kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" (**ROM 12:10**).
 - 1. Are we inclined toward or away from our brethren?
 - 2. Do we view each other as brothers or strangers?
 - 3. Do we prefer Christians? Do we make friends of them?
 - B. Our love for one another must be expressed in deeds. **1JO 3:17-19**.
 - C. We are to *care one for another* as members of the same body. **1CO 12:22-27**.
 - D. We are to *admonish one another*, i.e., to put one another in mind of duties; to counsel against wrong practices; to exhort one another. **ROM 15:14; HEB 3:13**.
 - E. Believers should identify with each other's highs and lows. **ROM 12:15; 1PE 3:8**.
 - F. We are to confess our faults one to another and pray one for another for healing. **JAM 5:16**.
 - 1. Christians cannot help one another to overcome weaknesses by pretending that they have none.
 - 2. We will come nearer dealing seriously with our faults if we handle them according to **JAM 5:16**.
 - G. Saints are to *comfort one another*, i.e., to strengthen; to encourage, to hearten; to support, and assist one another. **1TH 5:11**.
 - 1. This is a ministry of edification, of building one another up instead of tearing one another apart or down, or encouraging evil. **ISA 41:6-7**.
 - 2. Consider how Job comforted others and do likewise. **JOB 4:3-4; HEB 12:12-13**.
 - 3. Be a comfort to others. Nobody likes to be around a perpetual downer.
 - H. We are to *bear one another's burdens*. **GAL 6:2**.
 - 1. This does NOT mean that we fulfill each other's responsibilities. **GAL 6:4-5**.
 - 2. It means that we support each other through prayer, compassion, forbearance (**ROM 15:1; EPH 4:2**), exhortation, comfort and needed assistance. **ROM 12:13**.
 - I. We are to use *hospitality one to another without grudging*. **1PE 4:9; ROM 12:13**.
 - 1. hospitality: The reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.
 - 2. guest: One who is entertained at the house or table of another.
 - 3. **LUK 19:5-7; 2KI 4:8-10; 1TI 5:10 c/w 2JO 1:9-11**.
 - 4. If we will not thus receive brethren in our home, is it because the Holy Spirit who authored this instruction is not welcome there either.
 - J. Mind the emphasis on "one to another." How greatly this affects our friendly relating, preserving individual dignity and mutual respect!
- II. We all need this mutual ministry of Christian friends. **ECC 4:9-10; PRO 27:17**.
- III. Friendship requires an effort on our part to be friendly; it cannot be a one-way street. **PRO 18:24**.
 - A. Friendship is not only for what you can get out of it. **PRO 19:4-7; ACT 20:35**.
 - B. Be willing to make sacrifices for friendship. **JOH 15:13**.
- IV. There are varying degrees of friendship; we are more intimate with some than others.
 - A. Scripture speaks of:
 - 1. familiar friends. **JOB 19:14**.
 - 2. inward friends. **JOB 19:19**.
 - 3. chief friends. **PRO 16:28**.

- B. Intimate friendships require trust (**PSA 41:9; PRO 11:13**) and also openness. **JOH 15:15.**
 - C. Jesus Himself had a closer relationship with Peter, James and John.
 - D. We have only a limited capacity for inward, familiar friends, but blessed are those who have at least one. **1SAM 18:1; 20:41-42; 2SAM 1:26.**
 - E. While we must receive all of our brethren in the Lord and do them good as we have opportunity (**ROM 15:7; GAL 6:10**), we need not become *chief friends* with them all.
 - F. Smaller groupings of friends within the church may be expected because of past associations, location, shared interests, ages, etc. These groupings, however, should not become so exclusive as to treat others with contempt or unfairness. **JAM 2:1-4.**
 - G. While we may not be intimate with all, if everybody reaches out to somebody, all will be reached, especially if all are willing to show themselves friendly. **PRO 18:24.**
- V. Live a life worthy of good friendships.
- A. Defiling friendships are to be avoided. **PRO 22:24-25; 13:20; 1CO 15:33.**
 - B. Our first choice for friendship ought be from among our brethren. **PSA 119:63.**
 - C. Friendship does not give us the right to act in any way we choose and still be accepted of our friends.
 - D. “Friends don’t let friends drive drunk” is a deficient concept. True friends would discourage or forbid the drunkenness (or other sinful state) and respect the one who does the discouraging. **PSA 141:5.**
 - E. Respect boundaries and give people space for themselves. There are times when privacy, solitude and inconvenience must be respected.
MAT 14:23; 1CO 16:12; PRO 25:17; 1PE 4:15.
 - F. Demanded friendship is toxic. Real friendship comes naturally or is earned.
 - G. Betraying a friend is most cruel. **MAT 26:50.**