

## ***Sunday Sermon Notes***

### ***"Loving"***

#### **Remember the game plan!**

Making Christ-like disciples by  
Celebrating, Loving, Serving, Bringing

#### **Where are all the lonely people?**

At home, behind closed doors  
In this room, lost in the crowd  
Sitting nearby, hurting inside  
Maybe it's even you, maybe it's even me

#### **Feeling alone, behind a closed door:**

Isolated, Depressed, Angry

#### **Someone is knocking on my door: (Revelation 3:20)**

With no invitation  
With patient persistence  
With complete respect

#### **All I have to do is open the door!**

He comes in  
He "sups" with me

#### ***So why do I still feel lonely?***

#### **God's answer to loneliness: (1 John 4:7-12)**

Since God loves me...  
I must love someone else:  
It's not Jesus and me,  
It's Jesus and we  
He never stays with us behind the closed door!  
His love is made perfect by my love for others!

***Someone else needs me to love them!***

***Someone else needs to love me!***

## ***Digging Deeper***

### **Notes for Individual Meditation and Small Group Discussion**

#### ***Getting to know each other:***

What is your favorite memory of a childhood friendship?

What is the one relationship with another person that has had the greatest impact on who you have become?

Why do you think they had so great an impact on you?

#### ***Getting to know the Word:***

*Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-12*

Ecclesiastes recounts the struggle of a wise teacher wrestling with the issues which make life seem meaningless-- things like death, oppression and envy. In this passage he wrestles with the issue of friendlessness. In verse 7 he says that he saw a man who had no one to share life with -- neither son nor brother. Because there was no one with whom he could share his life with, he could not find contentment, regardless of how much he accomplished or accumulated. In the end, his loneliness made life "miserable business." Why do you think that is? What about being alone makes life so miserable?

In the next four verses the teacher outlines four reasons why "two are better than one." What are they?

Can you think of an example in your life in which you were able to accomplish more working together than you could ever have accomplished alone?

The teacher talks about how a friend is there to help you up when you fall down. Obviously that is literally true, but what are some ways that is also figuratively true?

Have you ever had a friend help you like that?

The teacher also talks about the comfort that comes from friendship. Again, there is a literal truth in his words about two keeping warm by lying down together. But there is also a figurative truth. Has there been a time when having a friend brought comfort in a difficult time in your life?

Finally the teacher talks about the fact that there is safety in numbers. What are some ways that a friend can help you avoid spiritual dangers?

*Applying God's Word to Our Life:*

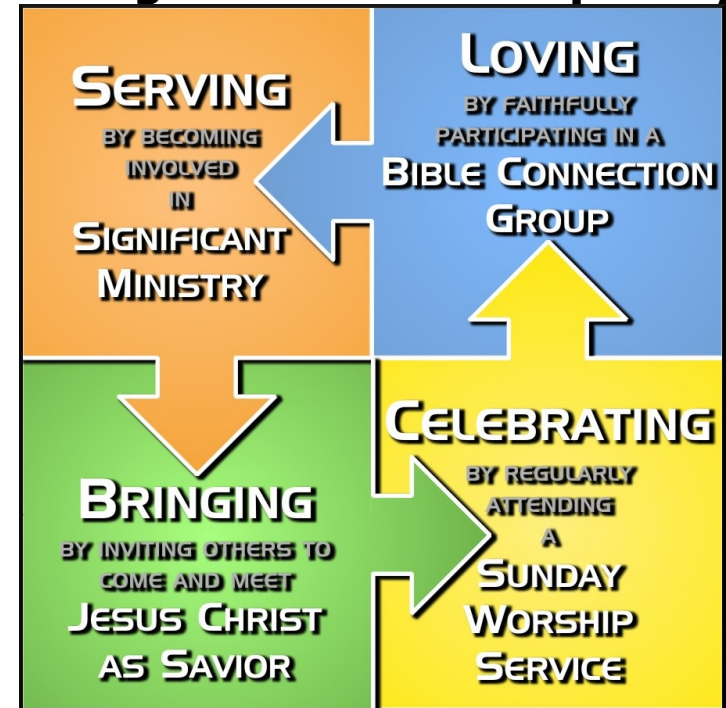
Not all friendships are helpful in these ways. Why do you think that is? What is the difference between superficial friendship and meaningful friendship?

How can you help the friendships in this group move from superficial to meaningful?

Of these four benefits to meaningful friendship, what do you most need in your life right now?

How can this small group provide this kind of support for each other? (This might not be a comfortable question to answer out loud, and it would be easy to just skip past it. But if we are going to move beyond merely superficial relationships and form something truly meaningful in these small groups we must take time to recognize the struggles we are in and think through how we can truly be there for each other.)

## Making Christ-Like Disciples by:



**September 23, 2007**

***1 John 4:7-12***

*"Loving"*

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