



# LifeSpot ... Friendship treasure

## The gift of friendship

Ruth and Naomi. David and Jonathan. Jesus and John. Paul and Timothy. Friendship, like family, is a gift from God. It's the free-will binding of one heart and mind to another, so that each shares a oneness even while independent. Unlike marriage and family, friendship has no status in law. It is freely entered into and freely maintained. Friendship is an enormous treasure for singles, but it's also important for married individuals. Christian friendship energises hope. It affirms faith. It inspires courage. It conveys wisdom. It transmits joy. No wonder Jesus invites us to be not merely his followers, but his friends. "You are my friends. I have called you friends." John 15:14, 15 (NIV).

## A covenant of friendship

"The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." 1 Samuel 18:1 (NIV). The word for "knit" means to tie, wrap around, bind, join together. It's the language of covenants. "Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul." When two people can be individuated and responsible adults, while at the same time bound with cords of love that make them one in heart and mind—that's mystery. It's connection. It's rare. No wonder God uses friendship as a symbol of the covenant relationship he wants between us and him. Jesus would like to have you as his friend! Are you in covenant friendship with him today?

## Lonely in friendship

Friendship is one of life's finest gifts. And it's a superb channel for Christian faith. If you have at least one close friend, you're blessed. "Better a nearby friend than a distant family." Proverbs 27:10 (MSG). But remember that friendship is not supposed to get rid of all loneliness, because loneliness has value until the resurrection, when we're fully restored to our friend Jesus. When we love Jesus, we're lonely for him—we miss him! Rich Mullins said it well: "If we are looking for relief from loneliness in friendship, we are only going to frustrate the friendship. Friendship, camaraderie, intimacy, all those things and loneliness live together in the same experience."

## Friendship for Christ's sake

We should not be in friendship with the world. But we must connect with people in the world, for Christ's sake. One day Josh McDowell spoke to 1,500 high school students on the subject of intimacy. Six teenage Gothics stood in front of him, dressed in black, tattoos and body piercings all over. They scowled. At the end, the leader leaped toward Josh. The crowd gasped. But with tears running down his face, the Gothic said "Mr McDowell, would you give me a hug?" As they hugged, the Gothic said, "My father never once hugged me or told me that he loved me." This is the look and feel of a world in need of our connection. Will you meet that need?