

**Sermon Notes and Discussion Questions:  
Following in His Footsteps: What a Friend  
John 15:12-17**

Who was your best friend growing up? What made him or her a good friend?  
How have your friendships changed in adulthood?  
How have your friendships changed as you've grown as a follower of Jesus?

**What's the greatest love? How did Jesus demonstrate that love to us? Think about Jesus' relationship with His disciples. How did Jesus stick with them? How did he draw them out? How did He forgive them?**

Jesus' relationship with the disciples demonstrates the way and wisdom of friendship. Even Jesus, who was God, didn't isolate Himself but pursued friendships. Even Jesus, who was the Messiah, sought the help of His friends. Over the course of years, Jesus spent countless meals, walks, workdays, and even parties with His disciples. At the end of His life, He called them His friends and said He would die for them.

If you want to have real friends, you first have to know friendship with God through the cross of Jesus Christ. He forgave you of your sins, set you free from your bitterness, healed the wounds of your past, and gave you the love of God to be a friend. True friendship happens in no other way.

**What does Jesus call us to do in the context of our relationship with Him? Why does the love of God at work in our lives call us to forgive others? How does forgiving others regularly draw us into deeper levels of friendship? What adjustments in our priorities and schedules would this kind of friendship require?**

The new commandment Jesus gives us is to love one another the way Christ loved us (see v. 12). He wants us to seek friendship and unity with one another in such a way that the world will know we're friends of Jesus. Forgiveness is an essential element of Jesus' friendship with us. When we love as Jesus loved and are friends as Jesus is a friend, we forgive as Jesus forgave us.

**APPLICATION**

**Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.**

**Who is God calling you to pursue in friendship this week? What will you invite them to do? When will you contact them to set this up?**

**How can we be a community that makes space to grow together as friends beyond the weekly group session?**

**How can we be the type of Christian community that makes space for friendships with people who don't believe in Jesus?**