

Strategic Friendship Guide



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WHY STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIPS?

Most people have acquaintances and friends, but how many people have others in their lives that help them grow stronger, go longer, and pursue Christ above all things?

There are different types of strategic friendships, so depending on your current season of life, it may look different. The best practice is only to have one type of strategic friendship at a time, but it is up to each individual. Some people can only handle 1, while others have all 3 simultaneously. ***There is no one-size-fits-all. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you and guide you.***

How is a strategic friendship different from other friendships?

1. Strategic friendships help others grow

Engaging in a strategic friendship, you will be helping others grow in their relationship with Jesus. As you meet with and pray with someone else, you will experience growth as a natural byproduct.

Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Growing followers of Jesus strategically disciple others. Jesus commands us to go and make disciples. The structural grammar of this verse does not mean Jesus gave us one more thing for our to-do list. In Greek, it means "as you go" about life, build disciples. As you live your life, work, enjoy hobbies, etc., build disciples. (Dr. Moles, Northpoint Bible College, 2020).

Question: Who in my daily rhythm of life can I pour into? (think of your work, school, neighborhood, family, both immediate and church).

2. Strategic friendships help you grow

2 Corinthians 3:16, 18 - But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

It is through strategic friendships that one can be an active follower of Jesus through intentional spiritual growth and movement to greater wholeness. (Discipleship). The Holy Spirit is working to make you more and more like Jesus every single day. His goal is for when people encounter you, they are encountering Jesus. The highway the Holy Spirit travels on the most is relationships.

Relationships are challenging and do take work. Yet, God speaks through others, challenges us through others, encourages us through others, and forms us through others. As you step into a strategic friendship, you will discover yourself becoming more and more like Jesus.

Question: Who would you love to meet with consistently to pray with and learn from? (think of your work, school, neighborhood, family, both immediate and church). _____

3. Strategic friendships strengthen the local church

Check out this awesome list of how strategic friendships make the church family (body) stronger.

- It makes discipleship less dependent on the church organization or programs. If programs built disciples, we would be at a different place within the church and within our nation.
- When a pandemic hits and the church cannot gather, the church does not cease to exist. Programs may have to shut down, but relationships do not. Those who had a strategic friend before the pandemic were able to continue growing and being strengthened.
- It reminds people that being a disciple is 24/7 and does not have to be within the four walls of the church building.
- It allows discipleship to be more relational and less programmatic.
- It creates a pathway for more individuals to be discipled at once.
- It helps everyone become more engaged in relationships.
- It encourages people to be more missional in their thinking.
- It helps with multiplication and disciple-making.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIPS?

Proverbs 27:17 – (NLT) - "As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend"

1. Strategic friends meet intentionally

- Iron cannot be sharpened unless it rubs against iron. Strategic friends meet consistently (of their own choosing) for the sole reason of sharing authentically, discussing the Bible, and praying together.
- The foundation of the friendship is Jesus Christ.

2. Strategic friends meet consistently

- You choose how often to meet with your strategic friend. You can meet weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- You decide how to connect. Some meet at a coffee shop, and others talk on the phone. The mode of connecting is not as important as consistency.

3. Strategic friends have missional DNA

- Missional defined is as living sent and/or on mission. God has called us to continually be reaching out to others for the Gospel of Jesus.
- Because of this DNA, strategic friends often have a shelf life. In other words, you may have certain friends for certain seasons. For example, if you have been meeting with a friend for over two years consistently and they have matured, it may be time for them to branch out and start meeting with someone else. It does not mean your friendship will end, and that you won't still connect, but the mission always takes precedence over comfort.

Question: Do I currently have someone in my life whom I intentionally meet with for spiritual growth?

HOW DO I DEVELOP A STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIP?

1. Cover this journey in prayer from the beginning. The Holy Spirit does an amazing job of orchestrating and connecting people together. Many people develop their strategic friendship naturally.

2. Identify someone in your life who needs to be discipled or who you would love to be discipled by. Think of someone you are already connecting with at some level.

3. Be proactive and ask the individual(s) to meet so you can share something on your heart.

4. Share the vision of strategic friendships and ask if they will meet with you consistently for intentional spiritual growth and accountability.

5. Meet on a day/time of your choosing.

6. At your first meeting, simply share your stories and see how God has already been at work in each of your lives. End the time together in prayer.

7. At the second meeting, share areas of your life you would love to grow. Pray together.

8. See the potential template below if so desired.

STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIP POTENTIAL TEMPLATE

Meet on a day/time of your choosing to...

Discuss Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Choose a Gospel or New Testament book to start reading. The goal is for everyone to immerse themselves in Scripture. Read one chapter a day until your next meeting. For example, read John 1-7 over the next week, and discuss. As one reads, they can underline, write down what God is speaking, general thoughts and any questions that arise. If you can handle more than one chapter a day, go for it.
2. Spend the first portion, sharing the above items from the daily readings. If one person has not read all of the daily readings, then everyone will go back the upcoming week and re-read the same chapters. Everyone cannot move on to the next 7 chapters until everyone has read the previous 7.

Character Building Questions:

1. Are you closer to Jesus this week than you were last week? Explain.
2. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ, both your words and actions?
3. Who have you intentionally blessed or served this week?
4. Who are you building a relationship with to share the Gospel?
5. Have you left any integrity in your financial dealings, or coveted something that does not belong to you?
6. Have you damaged another person with your words, either behind a person's back or face-to-face?
7. Have you given in to an addictive behavior this week? Explain
8. Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate sexual thoughts about another?

9. Have you continued to remain angry toward another, or have you secretly wished for another's misfortune?
10. Have you been completely honest with me?
11. How can I pray for you?