

THE LOST ART OF FRIENDSHIP

TALK IT OVER

Discern

How to Select the Right Friends

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October 21-22, 2023

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

Scriptures Used

Proverbs 13:20, 1 Kings 12:1–15a (NIV)

Questions:

1. Do you ever feel frustrated about your inability to change a character trait or behavior? Share something you would like to change about yourself or an area of life that you struggle with. If change is a team sport, what do you think about the idea of a community that keeps you accountable to grow?
2. Proverbs 13:20 says, “He who walks with the wise grows wise; but a companion of fools suffers harm.” What does it look like to walk with wise people? What does it look like to have a companion of fools? Share a story where your friends made you a better person, or a story where you learned a hard lesson.
3. We are influenced by messages in our culture and the people we interact with every day, especially those closest to us. Why is it important to surround yourself with like-minded people who share God’s values and goals? Talk about friends who have shaped your life in positive ways?
4. Our tribe shapes our trajectory. If we are not careful, we can be influenced in negative ways. What can happen if the people we spend the most time with have opposing goals and values? Talk about people in your tribe that may be pulling you in the wrong direction.
5. Take a sober, honest assessment of your own character traits and behavior patterns. How are your behavioral patterns shaping your friends? How are your friends’ behavioral patterns shaping you? Share how you can grow to be a wise friend who positively influences someone’s spiritual journey. Are there any behavior patterns that may be negatively

impacting those around you? What positive behaviors could you demonstrate more intentionally to be a wise friend?

6. The people invited to your table are significant because of their impact on your life. When choosing wise friends, who positively influence your spiritual walk, what character traits or behavior patterns are important to you and why? Talk about a time when someone's undesirable character traits or behaviors negatively influenced you? How would you avoid getting into the same situation again? What boundaries do you need to set to limit their influence on you? How could you do this in a way that demonstrates God's love and mercy?
7. Read 1 Kings 12:1-15 together. King Rehoboam rejected wise counsel, which resulted in permanently splitting the Kingdom of Israel in two: Israel and Judah. Talk about a time when you rejected wise counsel? What was the outcome, and how did God use that experience to grow you?
8. Think about areas of your life where you could benefit from someone else's strengths. Who could you invite to sit at your table to keep you accountable and pull you in the right direction (i.e., financial peace, relational health, spiritual growth, recreation analyst, director of personal growth, physical fitness director)?
9. Small groups are a great place to develop relationships with others that we could invite to sit at our table. What are some obstacles or excuses that we make to avoid joining small groups?

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group. This assessment will help you see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and will give you suggested next steps for each purpose. Click here to take the Group Health Assessment:

<https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>

2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to check out Saddleback's ever-growing library of small group curriculum.

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com