

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Icebreaker

How I convince people that I'm genuine:

- Be totally honest about their problems.
- Share dark secrets about my liposuction.
- Tell it all on the Jerry Springer Show.
- Play "I'm FINE!" (Fouled-up, Insecure, Neurotic, and Emotionally dead).
- Other: _____

Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-16

The Challenge of Friendship

–Ecclesiastes 4:7–8

[7] Again, I saw vanity under the sun: [8] one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business. (ESV)

Question: What kind of person is described in these verses?

- A successful person
- A lonely person
- A rich person
- Someone that doesn't understand why they are working so hard.
- Other: _____

What are some barriers in our society that make the challenge of friendship especially difficult?

- People move too much.
- Busy schedules
- Too many screens
- My house isn't clean
- Introverts are the real problem :)
- Other: _____

The Gift of Friendship

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

[9] Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. [10] For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! [11] Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? [12] And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (ESV)

Question: What benefits to friendship are named in this passage? Are there any of these benefits that you need in your life now?

Friendships are cultivated. They take time to grow, but we have to put ourselves in a position for this to happen. Here are a few things that can help develop friendships.

A few things that help build friendship:

1. Friendship is built on frequency.

They worshipped together regularly at the temple each day, met in small groups in homes for communion, and shared their meals with great joy.

–Acts 2:46 LB

What's the greatest benefit for you in connecting frequently with other believers?

- It helps keep me on track with God.
- I'm challenged by the faith of other Christians.
- I want the support.
- I need the accountability.
- Other: _____

2. Friendship is built on authenticity.

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it.

–Romans 12:9a

What motivates you to be open with others?

3. Friendship is built on unity of purpose.

Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church...be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

–1 Corinthians 1:10 NLT

What common purpose do you share with other believers that helps draw you closer to one another?

Work It Out!

One thing I'll do differently because of this sermon:
