

WHO IS THIS JESUS?—3. OUR FRIEND

STARTER (In pairs for 5 minutes) What do you most enjoy doing with friends?

READING John 15: 9--17

COMMENTARY Jesus makes it clear that his leaving is not everything. He promises that his disciples will live on in his love by keeping the commandments. He promises them joy in their continual union, and he is glad to call them *friends*. Jesus reminds them that he has made known to them all that he has heard from the Father. The challenge for them is to go forward and bear fruit by loving one another. God sent his only Son that *"we might have life through him."* Others are to have life through us. In Acts, Peter comes to realise that this gift is to be extended to the uncircumcised Gentiles as well as Jews. Anyone who reverences God and acts according to God's will is acceptable to God. [Baranowski]

*Lord, we have come at your own invitation,
Chosen by you, to be counted your friends;
Yours is the strength that sustains dedication,
Ours a commitment we know never ends* H & P 700



PERSONAL FOCUS QUESTIONS (triplets)

1. Which verse in this reading speaks to you? What is God saying to you?
2. When in the last week did you recognise God's love in your life? Do you think God's love is conditional on your obedience [vv10 &14]?
3. As you reflect on Jesus calling you his friend rather than a servant, what thoughts and feelings come to you? How might you respond this week?

LIFE FOCUS (Discuss in whole group)

1. How could you become better friends with other Christians in your community?

OR

2. Arrange a social event for your group including those unable or unwilling to attend on a Sunday.

GROUP MEMORY TIME (Review the actions you agreed to carry out at previous meetings)

Has the group got the required balance of talking and action?

PRAYER TIME You could pray for obedience to be faithful to Jesus.
You could pray for the friendless in society and your community.
You could pray for those who will benefit from Christian Aid.

THIS WEEK Pray for your special friends as well the members of the group.
Can you make a special effort to befriend someone in need?

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Leaders' notes

Purposes of this group session.

1. To explore how we are loved as a friend with Jesus.
2. To explore how as his friend we can best serve him joyfully.
3. To encourage group members to become more aware of each other including those not able to attend the group.

NOTE This passage has an apparent quite strong emphasis that his love is conditional on our obedience. See question 2. This is not so and may need to be made clear when the group comes together after the triplets. Jesus always loves us and as a consequence we will joyfully do what he wants us to do [v11].

In the Life Focus section you can choose between the question and the planning exercise depending on your view of which will be most helpful. Some people in a group will prefer talking and others action. Normally you need a balance. The Group Memory time enables you to have a brief check on how people feel about that as well reviewing if previous action planned actually happened.

Equipment for this session

A Bible for each person

Copy of worksheet for each member and supply of pens

Rough guide time

- 11.00 During coffee time prepare your group area
- 11.30 Starter
- 11.35 Bible reflection/ triplets
- 12.00 Life focus
- 12.15 Group memory time
- 12.20 Prayer time