

# Why Christian Leaders Need More Friends



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# The Problem

Friendship is in decline in the West

→ Britain: 25% no close friends

→ US: Quadrupled since 1990

→ EU: 10% Italians no friends

→ EU: 12-40% frequently lonely



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***Q: Why is friendship in decline  
in the West?***



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# The Problem

In culture, *philia* is pushed out by *eros*  
In church, *philia* is pushed out by *agape*



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***Q: Does Matthew 5:46-47 rule out preferential, reciprocal friendship?***

- Context?
- Luke 12:4 / John 15:15
- John 11:11
- Acts 19:31, 27:3
- 3 John

# What is a Friend?

*“A friend is some I can talk to,  
depend on, grow with, and enjoy”*



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# The Circles of Friendship



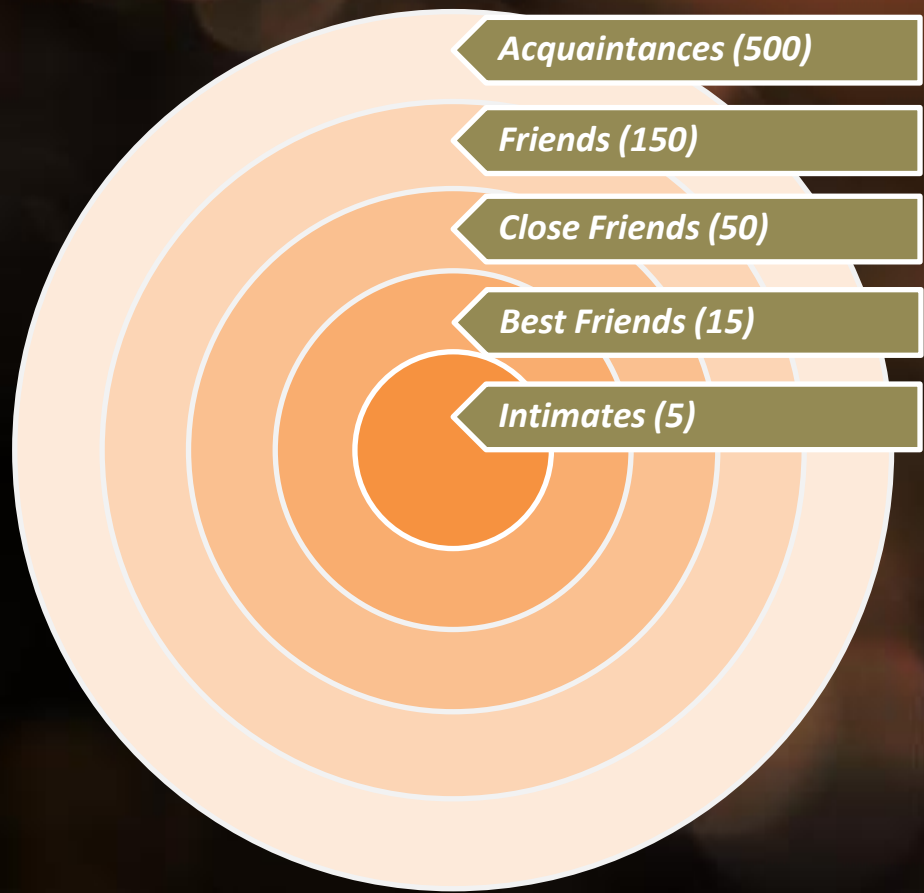
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*Acquaintances (500)*

*Friends (150)*

*Close Friends (50)*

*Best Friends (15)*

*Intimates (5)*

# Christian Workers

*30% lack close friendships*



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***Q: What forces make friendship  
difficult for Christian leaders?***



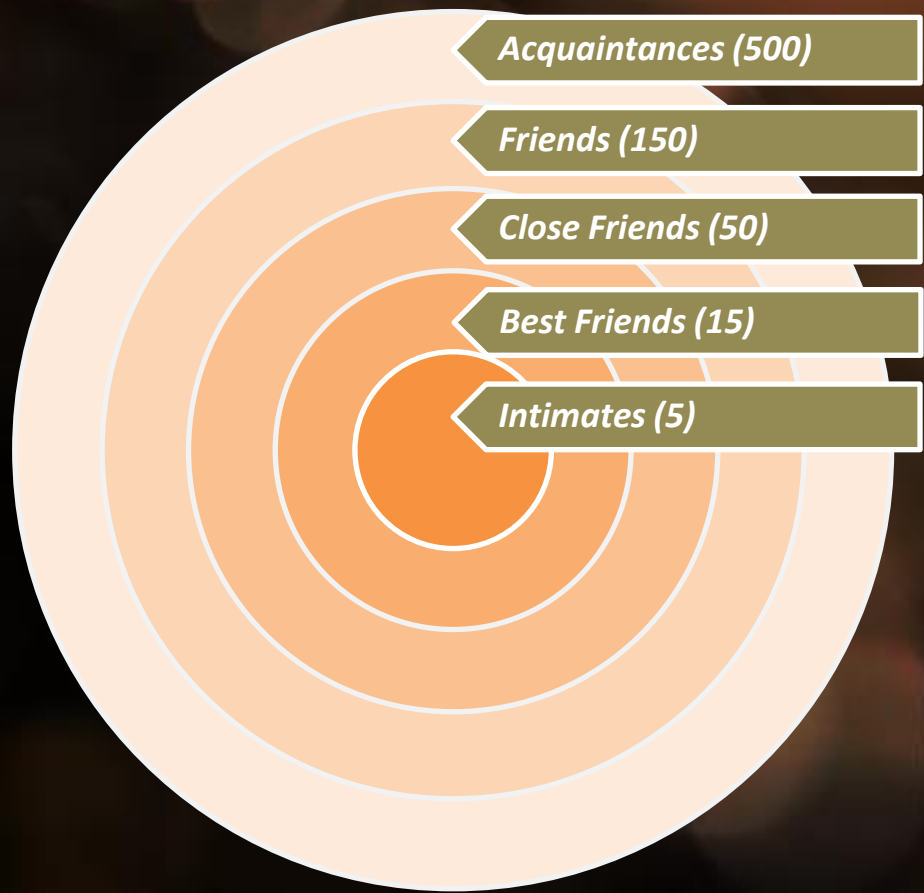
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# Benefits

**A buffer against extremism**  
**A weapon against prejudice**  
**A safeguard against addictions**  
**Boosts our immune system**



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# Benefits

**Decreases anxiety and depression**

**Increases our threshold for pain**

**Extends our lifespan by 30%**



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# Benefits

Shapes our characters

Affirms our identities

Confirms our callings

Energises us to live and serve



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# Benefits

**Philia is the best foundation for eros**  
**Philia is the ultimate fulfilment of agape**



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# The Solution

**Recognise friendship as a sacred calling**

Father rescues from idolatry  
(Ps 103:1-5)

Jesus rescues from insularity  
(Gal 3:23)

Holy Spirit rescues from implosion  
(Gal 5:22-26)



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<sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last...

**John 15:10-16**

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Friendship's sacred calling  
(John 15:10-16)



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# The Solution

**Recognise friendship as a sacred calling**  
**Intentionally cultivate connections**



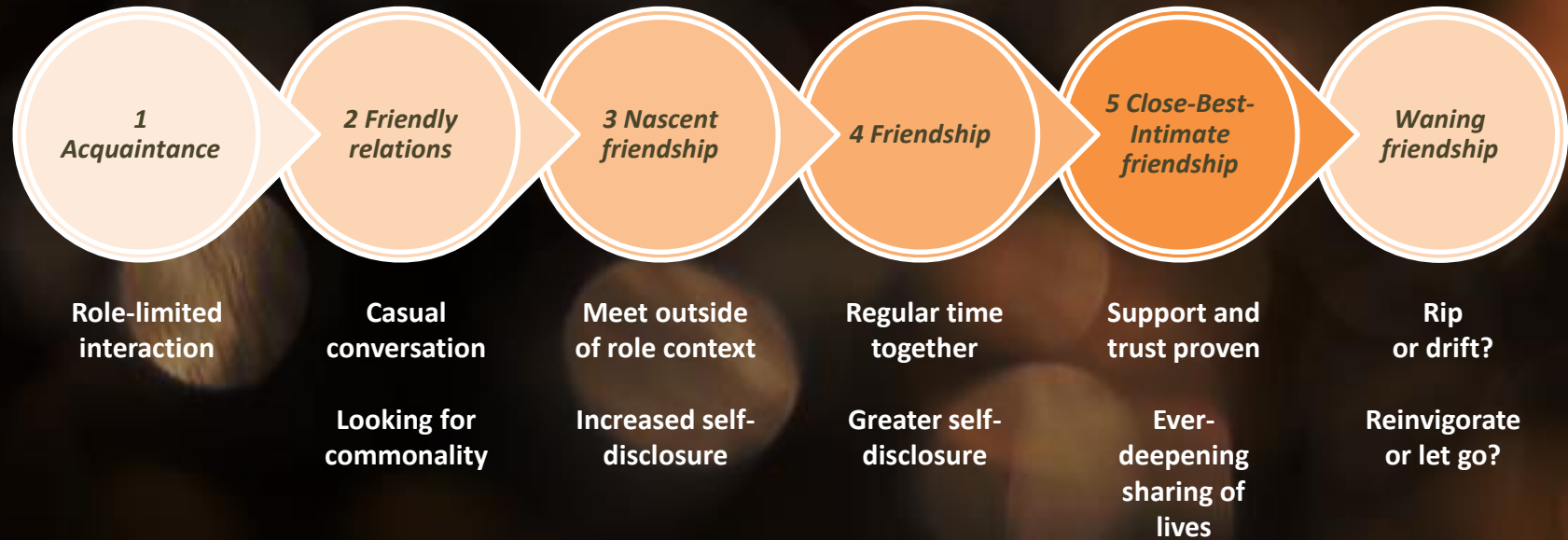
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# Friendship Lab

[www.sheridanvoysey.com](http://www.sheridanvoysey.com)



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