

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of September 16, 2018**

**THEME: "Friendships"  
BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIPS**

**Sunday ..... Read Daniel 1:1-12**

*"Now among these were the children of Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and to Hanniah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego."* This is just one of the many special friendships mentioned in the Bible. It is quite evident that God has done and is still doing a lot of His work on earth through friends working together. It seems that the great truth of Genesis 2:18 that *"It is not good that man should be alone"* setting the stage for bringing marriage into the human experience may rightfully have an application to special friendships as well. God certainly worked in and through that special friendship of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego during the years of their captivity in Babylon. When Daniel was in serious trouble, he and his three friends had a prayer meeting that resulted in sparing the life of Daniel and actually gave to us an overview of the history of the world! Think of how David benefitted from his friendship with Jonathan! Then there was that wonderful friendship that Naomi developed with her daughter-in-law Ruth resulting in a key part in the genealogy of our Savior. We read of Peter and John going into the temple for prayer at a designated hour to meet with God at His throne of grace, another reminder of the benefit of friends getting together for prayer. Not only is it good for students going back to school to renew and develop solid friendships, it is equally as vital for the members of a local church to do the same! From what we see in the Holy Scriptures, God is honored by friendships and uses them for His glory!

**WINNING FRIENDS**

**Monday ..... Read Proverbs 18:22-24**

*"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."* The way to win friends is to be friendly! Many have said that they have no friends, and wonder why. Well, maybe it is an inner problem, it just might be that an individual seems to be avoided because they don't greet others in a pleasant way. It is far better to take the initiative to be friendly rather than wait and hope others take notice to you. Yes, there are a lot of self-centered people who may reject an effort to be kind, but those who welcome conversation far outnumber those who look down on others. Few people resent a friendly and complimentary greeting. God did not make humans to live in isolation; He made us for friendships and fellowship. Interaction is mutually beneficial, but it should be with a friendly disposition. The question then is how can I be friendly? Few people will resent a compliment. Is it not a friendly gesture to offer a person a compliment? How many people would be turned off by a compliment? A simple gesture of kindness will probably result in a favorable reaction and maybe a lasting friendship! The way not to have friends is to live in isolation and avoid contact and conversation with others. The reverse is the way to win friends: seek to be with others and greet them! A friendly smile may help!

**REACHING OUT**

**Tuesday ..... Read Acts 9:26-27**

*"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the disciples, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus."* How important for people in a local church to reach out and make new friends. This is especially true in greeting newcomers! Barnabas set a great example that God recorded in His Word for our admonition. It was Barnabas who extended the hand of fellowship to Saul when he decided to make a visit to the local church in Jerusalem. Saul had a reputation that was not necessarily inviting and caused many to avoid him, but Barnabas rose above that and welcomed him to join into the fellowship; he spoke in Saul's defense. What a huge benefit and encouragement this must have been to Saul that helped to serve as a springboard to a life dedicated to serving our Savior. Who knows what would have happened with Saul had not God put Barnabas into his path on that visit to the church in Jerusalem. The love

and kindness of Barnabas ended up edifying the life of the man God would use to end up with one of the greatest outreaches in the history of the Church. Let all of us understand what a friendly handshake can do!

### TRUE FRIENDSHIP

**Wednesday ..... Read James 5:13-16**

*"Pray one for another."* One of the best ways to be a good friend is to pray for others. If we pray for others, we will probably want to stay in contact to see how God may be intervening on their behalf. That may create a friendship, and it certainly will enhance a friendship. Prayer brings God into the circumstances of the lives of those for whom we pray; and it brings us into the lives of those for whom we pray. Surely, we will be eager to hear how God is working in their lives, and that inquiry may establish a new friendship and will surely serve to strengthen an existing one. One way to deal with a situation where we may not care for another person, for whatever reason, is to pray for them. Praying for someone is a means of supporting someone; prayer is providing them an amazing benefit. It is caring for someone you don't care for; and it is tough not to care for someone for whom you are providing care! Be careful, you may end up liking the person you don't like; but that is the power of prayer! As much as the people for whom we are praying benefit, the people doing the praying are blessed beyond measure when they see God answering their prayers. Prayer affects attitudes! The truth is when we pray for others, we are benefitting as much, and maybe more than those for whom we are praying. Prayer brings us closer to God, and that is all good! Besides, God is pleased!

### ENCOURAGING

**Thursday ..... Read Ephesians 4:12-16**

*"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edification of itself in love."* One of the real benefits of friendships is the encouragement that comes with the friendships. The world is full of people who are so self-centered that it is refreshing for anyone to know they have others who are interested in their well-being. Now this is particularly true in a local church because our adversary is constantly on the prowl looking for ways to create division within a body of believers, especially if God is being honored by the ministry. Spiritual warfare is real, and the devil knows that the best way to avoid others having victory is to create discord. An alert body of believers will do all they can to maintain the unity that is so much on the heart of our Savior, as we know from His great intercessory prayer on our behalf. It was and, I believe, still is, the most repeated request He is making at the throne of grace in heaven at the right hand of God! A local church is best when all parts are working and they are working together. Our friends need encouragement!

### LOOKING AROUND

**Friday ..... Read Colossians 4:1-3**

*"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving: withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ..."* Our Savior came to *"Seek and to save that which was lost."* We know that from the account in Luke 19, when we saw that Jesus went out of His way to reach the hated Zaccheus. Believers should be very sensitive to all the needs of their fellow believers, but we must never lose sight of the final command of our Savior before returning to His home in heaven as stated in Mark 16:15: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* We don't have to travel thousands of miles to go into the world, we are in the world right where we are. When we go out of our houses, we are going into the world. We probably meet up with people every day who need to know about our Savior and Lord. The Holy Spirit is looking for faithful believers to share God's truth with hungry hearts. Always we should covet the prayer that Paul coveted as mentioned in today's Bible reading: *"Pray that God will open a door of utterance."* It is important that we are sensitive to God's opening a door. He knows the people and when their heart is prepared! He knows when it will be a *"word in season"* as mentioned several times in Scripture. We are working together with the Holy Spirit to reach the lost for Christ. Let us pray to be alert!

### STRANGERS

**Saturday .....Read John 4:3-7**

*"There came a woman from Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."*

What a model Jesus was for reaching the lost! Just the fact that He took notice of the woman shocked her! That was big, and then He asked for help making her feel important to Him. Her response opened the door for Him to turn the conversation from the temporal realm into the eternal realm. When she responded by mentioning her religion, Jesus was able to divert the conversation from temporal religion to spiritual truth. It didn't take a lot of convincing in terms of her seeing herself as a sinner, and that Jesus was offering her a way to be accepted by our Father in heaven. He was able to convince her of the big difference between earthly religion and spiritual life. She became a Christian!