



WOMEN WHO PRIZE
BEING FOUND IN CHRIST

Making Friends Made Easy

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Our American Culture has taught us to rely on me, myself, and I. “I got this” is a common mantra among all adult women, but that way of thinking goes against how we were designed. God created us first for relationship with him and second for relationship with others. We can tell ourselves that *we’ve got this* all day long, but if we are honest, we crave community. **So why is it so difficult for adult women to cultivate the authentic relationships that we desire?**

Three years ago, when I walked into New Song Church, I had a truth hit me- I don’t know how to start building friendships with these people. I decided to ask God to show me. He lead me to a book called “Friendships Don’t Just Happen.” This book changed my life. I learned how to honor every friendship at every stage. I learned that the depth in friendship that I craved typically takes over a year to cultivate. I learned that there are certain “milestones” that transition friendships to new levels and that as much as we want certain friendships to propel to the next milestone we have to honor them at the current level they are at while stepping toward those milestone markers. But perhaps the most important takeaway from the book were these three, simple words:

Consistent. Positive. Interactions.

Every relationship is built on consistent positive interactions- even our relationships with God. To create depth, to hit those milestones to closer friendships, and to make it possible to form the trust that we all crave we must have consistent positive interactions with the people we desire to have healthy friendships with.

I have prompted women who are struggling to connect in relationships to try creating consistent, positive interactions, and at first, they come back discouraged. They feel the person they were trying to reach out to didn't respond well. Or it didn't seem like a solid investing moment. They weren't sure if sending that text asking how their "friend's" weekend was, was effective. My response is always, "Was it positive? If it was, then you should chalk it up to a positive interaction, and consider it a necessary building block for your friendship with them."

Trust doesn't happen overnight, but it's a cornerstone of lasting, meaningful friendships. **And the way we build that kind of trust is by laying those small but necessary building blocks.**

Another way we build trust is by placing ourselves in environments that allow us opportunities to show up for one another. That's why being in a small group is so important! When we show up every month in an environment that is designed to breed healthy friendships, it's crucial that we steward well each moment we're given. **We must be present for those we are choosing to be in community with.**

I'm not just talking about delivering food when a baby comes or when someone has passed away. I'm talking about when someone opens up about a struggle, is overwhelmed, or even seems off from their usual demeanor- we need to show up, ready to respond with compassion. We reach out and check on someone when God lays them on our heart or when we notice they seemed sad at church. We don't mind our own business. No, we make sure God's daughter is doing okay. We ask how we can help. How we can pray. How we can be there. We call them up and listen. We allow the Holy Spirit to use us to speak comfort or wisdom. **These kinds of situations present themselves more often than we realize.** Let's be more aware, so when trust-building opportunities arise, we can show up and seize them!

How can you set the tone for this in your HIS group?

You can start tonight by making a list of every woman in your group. **Make it your mission to have a positive interaction with every person on that list, every single week.** You may say that you don't have much in common with a lot of these people and that sometimes it feels awkward. But these people are in your group, so you have at least three commonalities to start with:

Number One- You love God.

Number Two- You go to New Song Church.

Number Three- You attend a HIS Group- the SAME HIS Group!

These are starting points. Don't be afraid to use them. How did you hear about New Song? How or why did you get involved in New Song Groups? It gets the conversation going. Then you make it a goal to find out three facts about them outside of your common ground. Mom? Coffee Lover? Vegan? Shopping? This is where you build your relationship with them.

As someone who is cultivating something, we must take notice of the details. **If you treat your group members as acquaintances- they will stay acquaintances.** But if you will get intentional about getting to know the people in your group, relationships that seem surface level can go deeper. And your already deep relationships can go deeper still. I am not saying you need to be best friends with every person in your group. **But I am saying that God has these women in your life for a reason, and since we were created for community, we might as well make the most of it by investing in our relationships- no matter what stage they are in.**

I have found true community at New Song. My closest friends are people who my husband says, don't make sense as my best friends. Odd couples if you will. We seem like very different people from very different backgrounds, but my relationships with them were God-ordained, and our experiences and personalities didn't come into play when our friendships were forming. I wasn't looking for someone just like me. **I was looking for someone who was trustworthy and who would allow me to earn their trust and through consistent positive interactions I found my people.**

Move beyond your comfort zone, you never know, your people may be on the other side, and if they aren't- at least you've gotten to know some fantastic women a little bit better!

conversation starters

1. Describe your experiences making new friends as an adult woman.
2. How can you start seeing positive interactions as the critical building blocks that they are? What are some creative ways you can have weekly, positive interactions with the people in this group?
3. Trust is something that must be earned. Share some of the ways that people can earn your trust? In other words, how do you know when you can really trust someone?
4. You can't be everything to everyone. Some friends will be closer to you than others. What does it look like to have different levels of depth with friends while still seeing each friendship as playing a valuable role in our lives?
5. Are you having consistent, positive interactions with God? Would you say he is your closest friend?

his heart work

STUDY

Read through these scripture references and think about how they relate to friendships.

Exodus 17:12, Hebrews 10:23-25, Philippians 2:4, Romans 14:19, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Colossians 2:2.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you as you meditate on these passages?

ACT

Hang out with one person from your group outside of group this month! Ask them to share their story and be prepared to share yours.

prayer needs

Write down the prayer requests of your group members, and pray fervently for them! Let your group members know when you are praying for them, if you have any scriptures or encouraging words for them, etc.