**FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD**

**LAY TALK**

*20 minutes including introduction, prayer, etc.*

***Note to Speaker:***

*The objective of this Talk is to convey to Participants that God is not a chain‑gang boss sitting behind a big control panel on the edge of heaven waiting to catch us in some infraction of the rules.*

*God longs for friendship with us even though we have repeatedly abandoned that friendship for others. God has pursued us through history, and continues to pursue us.*

*God reaches out through the ministry and life of Jesus because He loves us so much. Even our crucifixion of Him could not turn God aside from His love for us and He continues even here today to return to offer us His loving friendship; that all of us coming as Team members to share this time with the Participants are convinced that God's friendship is the most worthwhile of any life goal, a goal which is worthy of the very best in us.*

PRAYER: Kairos Community Prayer, pg. 11, Freedom Guide

***Speaker introduces self, telling name, a lay person and giving name of talk.*** *This information should also be displayed on a poster board, flip chart sheet, or written on chalk board.*

INTRODUCTION:

In the last talk you learned that there are people out there who do care for you. And, that's great! They cared enough to pray for you and to write notes and draw posters to share their love with you. We're glad there are people like that somewhere out there who are willing to offer us love and concern.

Yes, that is nice...BUT!

What if they really knew me? Would they still talk like that? Would they want to be my friend?

Sending good wishes and prayers is nice, but what we need is a friend!

I. What is a friend?

A. Is it somebody who agrees with me all the time or always takes my side in an issue? Not necessarily... in fact they may disagree if they see me doing or saying something which might hurt me.

B. A friend is:

1. **Someone who wants the very best for your life**. *(Repeat)*

2. Someone who is willing to give some of himself/herself to help you move toward your best.

3. Someone who gives you space when you need it, and can let you make your own decisions ‑ even your own mistakes.

4. Someone who doesn't run away when you make a mess of everything and still accepts you as a friend.

II. Where do you find a friend like that?

A. There is GOOD NEWS!

1. God created us for companionship and to live in community with other people.

2. God is love. He created us to love and be loved.

III. **God is not an enemy**.

A. God is not trying to catch us in sinful disobedience.

1. The meaning of "sin" is "missing the mark or the target." God's target for us is to live in loving relationship with Him. Sin is thus missing that target of a loving relationship with God. It is this separation from God which is sin, just as the prodigal son separated himself from his father.

2. God doesn't want us separated from Him; He wants us to be part of His body. An outward symbol of being part of God's body is baptism and the renewal of baptismal vows.

B. God does not manipulate us into separation from Himself so that He can punish us.

IV. GOD WANTS TO BE OUR FRIEND!!

A. God called the Hebrews out of Egypt and offered them a covenant. They drifted in and out of the covenant relationship.

B. God sent these men/women: (*use Family names)* and used their friendship with Him to spread His word.

C. He also sent His son, Jesus, the Christ.

1. Jesus is God, He and the Father are one and they work through the Holy Spirit, who is also God with them.

2. Jesus is the Christ, meaning "the anointed one." It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, "Messiah," the anointed one or "liberator."

3. Jesus announces the Kingdom of God.

4. Jesus offers us eternal life. Through His death He enables us to die to self. He gives us life by giving up His own life. This is what Grace is all about!

5. In Jesus, God completes the offer of His friendship to us.

V. Even God cannot have a friendship alone. It takes two, with both of them giving and receiving affection and esteem. It is up to us to OPEN THE DOOR to God's friendship.

*Give a witness from your personal life of how God's friendship has brought peace from moments of joy to comfort from moments of pain, release from bondage, or despair.*

VI. The most rewarding choice is living in Friendship with God.

A. It is the only choice that is worthy of us. It is totally satisfying.

B. We are children of God, loved and created by God.

C. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, loved and redeemed by Him.

1. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, who loves and sustains us.

(NOTE: The following description is VERY important because it opens the door to following talks that will build the 3-Legged Stool concept from it.)

We’ll use this wooden circle to represent “Friendship with God”. We’ll be adding things to it throughout the Weekend so it will be left up here at the speaker’s podium. There’s nothing magical about this circle, no hocus-pocus about it. It’s special because of what it represents for all of us, a symbol of *Friendship with God.* And it’ll be fun to watch it change into something meaningful for all of us.

Please bow your heads for 2 minutes of silent meditation. *(Speaker walks away)*