

## **FRIENDSHIP** **by Serge Kahili King**

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

This statement of Jesus from John 15 has become so familiar that it's easy to miss what's really being said. In context it is saying that there is no greater kind of love than friendship. Not brotherly, or sisterly, or parental or devotional or altruistic love. Friendship tops them all. The rest of the chapter contains equally important and related statements that are seldom quoted. Here's the whole thing:

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends ... Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my father I have made known unto you."

This is a relationship of equals, the highest form of love that Jesus can offer his disciples. It is also worth noting that at other times when Jesus greets someone, even Judas, it is as "Friend." Never as Brother or Sister, for instance. As a matter of fact, Proverbs 17:17 says "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Of course, if a brother is also a friend, that changes everything.

A couple of other things worth noting from the Bible: Exodus 33:11 says "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." And in the Book of James it says that Abraham was called the "Friend of God." Obviously this term was used on purpose to convey a very high kind of mutual love.

In modern times a psychological study of happiness showed that it was mostly attained by people with at least one close relationship and a circle of supporting friends. An apparent anomaly in the study was that soap opera buffs tended to rank higher in happiness than non-buffs, and it has been suggested that the buffs think of the actors as their friends. The friends don't have to be people, either. Other studies show that people with pets as friends tend to be not only happier, but healthier, too.

Is there a difference between friendship and love? Apparently not. In Middle English the word "friend" means "lover," and it stems from a word in Old Gothic meaning "to love." If anything, it implies a deeper kind of love, one that goes beyond obligation.

Hawaiians had many terms for "friend" that signified varying degrees and types of friendship. *Hoaloha* (beloved companion), for example, is a general term for friend. *Makamaka* (face to face) is a friend with whom you share freely. *Aikane* (probably "dependable") is a close, personal

friend of the same sex. *Pili'alo'ha* (sticky love) is a romantic friend. And here's a great one: *'au ko'i* (axe handle), a trusted friend.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said "The only way to have a friend is to be one." But many people have trouble making friends because they don't know how to be one. So here is a set of guidelines to help you remember:

F = Freedom (give up control)

R = Respect (respect your differences)

I = Interest (take an interest in your friend's interests)

E = Equality (treat your friend like an equal)

N = Nurture (nurture your friend's best qualities)

D = Devotion (be loyal and helpful whenever, wherever, and for as long as you can)

These aren't new ideas. You can find all of them in the sayings of many well-known people. Here are some of my favorite quotes on friendship.

Let's start with a couple by that famous author, Anonymous:

"Don't walk in front of me. I may not follow. Don't walk behind me. I may not lead. Walk beside me. Just be my friend" and, "You know you have found a friend when you walk in their house and your WiFi connects automatically."

Writer Elbert Hubbard said, "A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you."

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said, "It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages."

Artist Linda Grayson said, "There is nothing better than a friend, unless it is a friend with chocolate."

A.A. Milne, author of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, wrote "You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes."

Poet and Cartoonist Shel Silverstein wrote this little poem:

"How many slams in an old screen door?

Depends how loud you shut it.

How many slices in a bread?

Depends how thin you cut it.

How much good inside a day?

Depends how good you live 'em.

How much love inside a friend?

Depends how much you give 'em."

French author of The Three Musketeers Alexander Dumas said, "Friendship consists in forgetting what one gives and remembering what one receives."

The Greek historian Plutarch said, "I don't need a friend who changes when I change and who nods when I nod; my shadow does that much better."

Celebrity Oprah Winfrey said, "Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down."

Another good one by Friedrich Nietzsche: "Love is blind; friendship closes its eyes."

Writer Jess C. Scott said, "Friends are the family you choose."

Self Help author Dale Carnegie said, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."

And I'll close this list with a simple, but powerful Hawaiian proverb about friendship:  
*"Pili kau, pili ho'oilo - Together in the dry season, together in the wet season"*