



Proximity and Presence

Logan Holloman | NextGen Pastor | May 28, 2023

"After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you, for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers. Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity. Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love. You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition." **1 Corinthians 16:5-18 (NIV)**

What is the biggest barrier for you to get over in making friends?

Friendship takes proximity and presence.

God models for us presence and proximity.

Paul's people:

- Ephesians 6:21-22
- 1 Corinthians 16:5-18
- Romans 15:22-16:18
- Colossians 4:7-18
- Philemon 1:1-3, 22-24



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How do you make a friend?

- Embrace the awkward
- Be courageous
- Root your identity + value in Jesus

"It's scary to initiate but Jesus was the great initiator" -**Jennie Allen**

But nothing that exciting happened. They sang a few songs and then talked about the Bible for a while. At the end of the meeting, everyone paired off to pray for each other and the pastor asked me what I thought of the group. Then he asked if I would come back. I said I guess, but I wasn't sure. That was seven years ago. Some of those strangers from the house that first night are now some of my closest friends. It didn't happen overnight. It took me a long time to feel comfortable. I usually came after the life group had already started and left as soon as it was over. But I was seeing the same people every week and I was telling them about my problems and they were telling me about theirs. Do that for long enough and you become friends. You get to know enough people that way and life group goes from being an obligation to something you look forward to. - **Jonathan Tjarks**

What's the cost of not finding a few deep friendships?

Reflection Questions:

- 1) What is the biggest barrier, obstacle, or fear for you to get over in making friends?
- 2) Brian shared last week some numbers around our time and friendship. What are some possible things you might need to say "no" to in order to prioritize friendships?
- 3) Who are one or two people in your life that are already in your presence and proximity who has the potential to become a friend? What's one step you can take this week towards that?