

ROCKYPC SERIES COMPANION



**FRIENDSHIP
— MATTERS —**

TERM 2, 2021



“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.”

JOHN 15v12-17

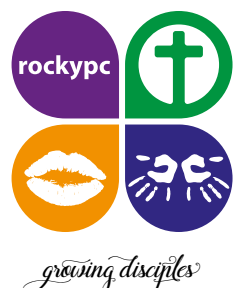
The last 12 months have been really tough on everyone. The rapid spread of the coronavirus and the ensuing pandemic preventative restrictions upset the normal patterns of every day life for everyone and interrupted everyone’s normal relationships with friends and family. Even as restrictions eased, those relationships have been affected in an ongoing way, even at church. Since returning together in July 2020, a common feeling expressed at church is that people feel unloved and lonely. People feel disconnected and isolated. Despite our desire to be a place where people feel warmly welcomed and loved, sadly, it seems like lots of people don’t yet feel like they have friends at **rockypc**.

This isn’t just a church problem, and it hasn’t come about solely because of COVID-19. It is a long-standing problem across Australia.

Before the onset of the pandemic, McCrindle Research performed a study on mateship — 97% of men believe that making time for their friends is essential, but 85% say that they don’t get to spend enough time with them. This was due to a wide range of factors like work, family, health or fitness. All these things can limit a person’s ability to stay connected or enhance it, but the struggle is real. 90% of men say that having a barbeque with friends is something they enjoy doing whilst 30% of men say that they do it less than they used to 3-5 years ago. Yet, one in five have turned down a night with close friends to stay home and watch TV or Netflix in the last six months.

An article from Australian Women’s Health (November 2019), cited various studies finding that the highest rates of social isolation for women were amongst 25 to 29 year olds. Also, “30% of millennials say they always or often feel lonely, compared with 20% of Gen X and 15% of baby boomers.” Meanwhile, older adults tend to report better social well-being, despite smaller social networks.

No matter what generation you belong to, and whether the struggle is real for you or not, the need for quality friendships is still there — not just in society, but here at **rockypc**. So, we want to help unpack friendship in a biblical way and see that friendship is crucial for us as humans, see what friendship should look like in the church and see how friendship is critical to evangelism.



#1 FRIENDSHIP IS CRUCIAL



IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

#1

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

FRIENDSHIP IS CRUCIAL



IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

Place yourself on the scales below. (There is no right answer. We are all different)

I MAKE FRIENDS EASILY

IT TAKES ME A LONG TIME TO DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS

I HAVE LOTS OF VARIED FRIENDSHIPS

I HAVE A FEW VERY CLOSE FRIENDS

I AM CONFIDENT MEETING NEW PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

I AM MORE CONFIDENT IN QUIETER OR STRUCTURED CONTEXTS

Write down some of the key friendships that you have in your life and ways that each of those friends enrich your life. How do they show their friendship? Is it different from the way you show your friendship to them?

FRIENDSHIP IS GOOD

1. Break into pairs and divide up the following passages. Complete the table and share what you found with the rest of the group.

BIBLE PASSAGE	WHY IS FRIENDSHIP GOOD?	HOW IS THIS COMFORTING?
Genesis 1v26-28		
Genesis 2v18-25		
Proverbs 18v24		
Proverbs 27v6		

BIBLE PASSAGE	WHY IS FRIENDSHIP GOOD?	HOW IS THIS COMFORTING?
Mark 12v29-31		
John 14v20		

“ IN MANY WAYS YOU COULD SAY THAT THE BIBLE’S STORYLINE IS ALL ABOUT GOD RESTORING FRIENDSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE.
— VAUGHAN ROBERTS, TRUE FRIENDSHIP

FRIENDS WITH GOD

READ JOHN 15v1-17

2. What kind of friendship can we have with Jesus?
3. How is this friendship different from our human friendships?
4. What happens when our friendship with Jesus is not our primary / ultimate friendship? How does it harm us and others?

“ MANY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE INSECURE BECAUSE WE FEEL WE HAVE TO EARN THE APPROVAL AND AFFECTION OF OTHERS, AND ARE NEVER QUITE SURE WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, BY CONTRAST, IS COMPLETELY SECURE, IF WE HAVE TRUSTED IN CHRIST, BECAUSE IT DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON HIS SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS AND NOT ON ANYTHING WE HAVE DONE.
— VAUGHAN ROBERTS, TRUE FRIENDSHIP

growing disciples

At rockypc we want to be growing disciples who sacrifice, serve and speak for the sake of others, so we want to consider how this part of God’s word helps us grow.

SACRIFICE

ATTITUDE BEFORE ACTION

DENY YOURSELF

SEEK GOD

CONFESS/REPENT

In what ways do you need to re-prioritise your friendship with God?

Is loneliness a struggle for you? How can what we’ve seen in God’s word be a comfort to you?

Or do you value your independence? How has God’s word challenged you to see the importance of friendship?

SERVE

HUMILITY BEFORE
HONOUR

SERVE GOD

SERVE OTHERS

SHARE & EXALT
JESUS

“Don’t just want friends — want to be a good friend!”

What practical steps do you think you need to take in order to be a good friend? Be specific!

SPEAK

TO GOD ABOUT
PEOPLE

TO PEOPLE ABOUT
GOD

Talk to God to confess the ways you’ve failed to be a friend who lays down their life and ask for his help to love like this.

Ask for his comfort in loneliness, that we’d be satisfied in his love and empowered to keep loving others.

#2

FRIENDSHIP IS HARD



IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

#2

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

FRIENDSHIP IS HARD



IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

What are some of the hard things about friendship? In what ways is it harder for men? In what ways is it harder for women?

LAST WEEK WE LOOKED AT THE IDEA THAT FRIENDSHIP IS CRUCIAL... RECAP WHAT YOU LEARNED LAST WEEK.

FRIENDSHIP & SIN

READ GENESIS 2v15-3v13

1. What was the first sin? What timeless truths does it show about all sin?

2. What are some of the relational consequences of sin?

FRIENDSHIP & PROVERBS

3. What warnings are there in the Proverbs about friendship?

BIBLE PASSAGE	WHAT IS THE WARNING?
Proverbs 12v26	
Proverbs 14v20	
Proverbs 16v28	
Proverbs 17v9	
Proverbs 18v24	
Proverbs 26v18-19	
Proverbs 27v14	

FRIENDSHIPS & RECONCILIATION

READ ROMANS 5v6-11

4. What do we learn about true friendship with God?

5. How does this friendship give us the power and model for true friendship with others (Read also Romans 12v1-2; 9-19 & Ephesians 4v32-5v2)?

growing disciples

At rockypc we want to be growing disciples who sacrifice, serve and speak for the sake of others, so we want to consider how this part of God's word helps us grow.

SACRIFICE

ATTITUDE BEFORE ACTION

DENY YOURSELF

SEEK GOD

CONFESS/REPENT

“WE ARE FINITE AND THEREFORE WE DO NOT EXPECT TO FIND FINAL SUFFICIENCY IN ANY HUMAN RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING MARRIAGE. THE FINAL SUFFICIENCY IS TO BE FOUND ONLY IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ... IF A MAN TRIES TO FIND EVERYTHING IN A MAN-WOMAN, OR A FRIEND-FRIEND RELATIONSHIP, HE DESTROYS THE VERY THING HE WANTS AND DESTROYS THE ONE HE LOVES. HE SUCKS THEM DRY, HE EATS THEM UP AND THEY, AS WELL AS THE RELATIONSHIP ARE DESTROYED. BUT AS CHRISTIANS WE DO NOT HAVE TO DO THAT. OUR SUFFICIENCY OF RELATIONSHIP IS IN THAT WHICH GOD MADE IT TO BE, IN THE INFINITE-PERSONAL GOD ON THE BASIS OF THE WORK OF CHRIST IN COMMUNICATION AND LOVE.

— FRANCIS SCHAEFFER (EXCERPT FROM VAUGHAN ROBERTS: TRUE FRIENDSHIP)

Do you find sufficiency in God? How can you cultivate this in your life?

SERVE

HUMILITY BEFORE HONOUR

SERVE GOD

SERVE OTHERS

SHARE & EXALT JESUS

What stands out for you from Romans 12?

How can God's demonstration of love in Jesus motivate you to love others in this way?

SPEAK

TO GOD ABOUT PEOPLE

TO PEOPLE ABOUT GOD

In what ways have you personally experienced hardships in friendships like Proverbs describes?

Consider sharing ways you have failed as a true friend.

How can you give and receive forgiveness to restore relationships? Who do you need to speak words of forgiveness to this week?

#3

FRIENDSHIP AT CHURCH



IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

#3

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

FRIENDSHIP AT CHURCH



IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

As a group, brainstorm as many songs as you can that are about friendship. What kinds of messages do popular songs give us about friendship?

1. As you read each passage below, draw a quick picture of what it tells us church is like and think about why this image is important.

BIBLE PASSAGE	DRAW A PICTURE	HOW DOES THIS IMAGE SHOW US SOMETHING IMPORTANT ABOUT CHURCH?
1 Corinthians 12v12-31		
Ephesians 5v22-31		
1 Thessalonians 4v9-12		
1 Peter 2v4-10		
1 Peter 5v1-6		

// THE BIBLE DOESN'T REALLY TALK ABOUT CHURCH MUCH IN TERMS OF FRIENDSHIP. BECAUSE THE BEST CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS GO FAR DEEPER THAN MOST PEOPLE'S IDEA OF FRIENDSHIP. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, CHRISTIANS CALL EACH OTHER BROTHER AND SISTER. THIS IS BECAUSE JESUS MAKES US CLOSER THAN FRIENDS. HE MAKES US BROTHERS AND SISTERS. GOOD CHURCH GOES WAY BEYOND FRIENDSHIP BECAUSE JESUS HAS MADE US MORE THAN FRIENDS. HE'S MADE US FAMILY, A FLOCK AND A BODY. WE'RE CLOSER THAN FRIENDS!

— GREG LEE, HUNTER BIBLE CHURCH

READ 1 JOHN 1v1-7 AND EPHESIANS 2v11-21

2. How does the gospel change the way we think about friendship?

growing disciples

At rockypc we want to be growing disciples who sacrifice, serve and speak for the sake of others, so we want to consider how this part of God's word helps us grow.

SACRIFICE

ATTITUDE BEFORE ACTION

DENY YOURSELF

SEEK GOD

CONFESS/REPENT

How does your attitude to others at rockypc match with the New Testament picture?

SERVE

HUMILITY BEFORE HONOUR

SERVE GOD

SERVE OTHERS

SHARE & EXALT JESUS

// FRIENDSHIP DOES NOT OCCUR BY ACCIDENT, BUT REQUIRES TIME AND EFFORT. AS HUGH BLACK WRITES: THE COMMONEST MISTAKE IS THAT WE SPREAD OUR INTERCOURSE OVER A MASS AND HAVE NO DEPTH OF HEART LEFT. WE LAMENT THAT WE HAVE NO STAUNCH AND FAITHFUL FRIEND WHEN WE HAVE NOT REALLY EXPENDED THE LOVE WHICH PRODUCES SUCH. WE WANT TO REAP WHERE WE HAVE NOT SOWN ... THE SECRET OF FRIENDSHIP IS JUST THE SECRET OF ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS; THE WAY TO GET IS TO GIVE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE WAY TO HAVE GOOD FRIENDS IS TO BE A GOOD FRIEND. INSTEAD OF LAMENTING THAT NO ONE INVITES US FOR A MEAL, THAT OUR CHURCH IS SO UNFRIENDLY AND THAT EVERYONE RELATES AT SUCH A SUPERFICIAL LEVEL, LET US TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO OPEN OUR HOMES AND LIVES AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS."

— EXCERPT FROM: VAUGHAN ROBERTS. "TRUE FRIENDSHIP"

Do you have time for friendships at church?

How can you make space your life to allow these friendships to grow? How can you help one another as a GROWTH GROUP?

SPEAK

TO GOD ABOUT PEOPLE

TO PEOPLE ABOUT GOD

Write down someone that you would like to pursue a friendship with or deepen a friendship with.

How will you go about initiating this (even if it takes you outside your comfort zone)?

#4

DEEPENING FRIENDSHIP



IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

#4

GROWTH GROUP STUDY

DEEPENING FRIENDSHIP



IN THE SPACES BELOW YOU CAN RECORD YOUR ANSWERS. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

GETTING STARTED

What sorts of things do you like to do when you spend time with friends?

Can you think of friendships that have moved from being mates/acquaintances to close friends? Can you remember what helped the change?

How would you describe a "deep" friendship?

READ PHILIPPIANS 1v1-11

1. What is the basis for Paul's partnership with the Christians in Philippi?
2. How does he feel about them?
3. What are his most urgent prayers for them?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2v1-11

4. What do Christians have in common with one another?

5. How should our mindset about relationships at church be shaped by Jesus?

growing disciples

At rockypc we want to be growing disciples who sacrifice, serve and speak for the sake of others, so we want to consider how this part of God's word helps us grow.

SACRIFICE

How have you failed to have Jesus' mindset in your church relationships recently?

ATTITUDE BEFORE
ACTION

How does this passage encourage/comfort you?

DENY YOURSELF

SEEK GOD

CONFESS/REPENT

SERVE

Jesus is what Christians have in common! How can sharing Jesus deepen our relationships?

HUMILITY BEFORE
HONOUR

Why are we tempted to drop Jesus out of our Christian friendships? What is the danger of it?

SERVE GOD

How can your Growth Group deepen friendships centred on Jesus? What barriers are there?

SERVE OTHERS

Are we allowed to build these kinds of relationship with people outside our Growth Group? What advantages/ struggles can come with this?

SHARE & EXALT
JESUS

SPEAK

Do we always have talk to about serious Christian things? Are we allowed to have fun as well? How can those two things help each other along?

TO GOD ABOUT
PEOPLE

TO PEOPLE ABOUT
GOD

#5

FRIENDSHIP & MISSION



IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

growing disciples

At rockypc we want to be growing disciples who sacrifice, serve and speak for the sake of others, so we want to consider how this part of God's word helps us grow.

SACRIFICE

ATTITUDE BEFORE ACTION

DENY YOURSELF

SEEK GOD

CONFESS/REPENT

Do you view others through this gospel lens?

Do you feel urgency in imploring the non-believers in your life that now is the time of God's favour and salvation?

SERVE

HUMILITY BEFORE HONOUR

SERVE GOD

SERVE OTHERS

SHARE & EXALT JESUS

What worries you about inviting a non-believing friend to church?

What makes it awkward or embarrassing?

What can you and your group do to change these things?

What in your attitude needs to change?

SPEAK

TO GOD ABOUT PEOPLE

TO PEOPLE ABOUT GOD

Fill in a new 5 4 Jesus card with 5 non-believing friends. Will you commit to pray for each of them this year?

For each of those friends, fill in the table below to think about their current response to Jesus, and the next step you can prayerfully take to help them move towards Jesus. See below the table for some ideas.

Friend's name	Hostile	Open	Considering	Trying out	Entry level acceptance	Next Step

Some 'next step' options:

1. An initial conversation about Christianity... try the question: do you have a faith?
2. Going along to their thing/event
3. Introducing them to your Christian friends
4. Inviting them to coffee or dinner
5. An invitation to an event organised by church
6. An invitation to church
7. An invitation to Conversations that matter or the Life Course
8. An invitation to read the Bible with you