

PREPARING AT HOME

April 30-May 6, 2018

Focus reading: John 15:9–17 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=386759682>)

Other lectionary readings: Acts 10:44–48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1–6

Theme: Loving Friends

Anyone who is a follower of Jesus is also his friend. The relationship is an intimate one defined by love, the same kind of love that God has for Jesus. Faithful obedience is a response to and an expression of that love. Jesus' followers obey his teachings not because they are servants or because they are hired hands who are seeking a reward but because they are known and loved by Jesus, even as Jesus was known and loved by God. So are Jesus' followers to love others with that same kind of love that Jesus shows to them. We cannot love God without loving others. Jesus is inviting his followers to join the great dance that he and God the Creator have been dancing since the beginning of time. It is a dance in which the partners know the movements of one another as well as they know their own, in which the partners trust one another fully and give themselves completely, a dance in which partners blend their separate movements to create one seamlessly beautiful dance. Such intimacy involves willing sacrifice, as we follow the lead of Jesus. We don't have to break our way into this dance. We are invited to join, called to take the steps and perform the movements that will bring the choreography to life. Rather than watching from a distance, we are chosen to join this joyful, intimate dance of love.

MY FRIEND, JESUS

Jesus chooses us to be his friend. Some people communicate with their friends on Facebook or text their friends during the day. Pretend you are using Facebook or texting with a cell phone. What short messages would you send to your friend Jesus throughout the week? Create some messages each day this week! Stay in touch with your friend!

BE A FRIEND!

Jesus tells his followers to love others with the same kind of love that God has for Jesus and that Jesus has for us. Be a true friend to someone this week. Do something unexpected to say "You are loved!"

PRAYER

Loving God,
we give thanks for friends,
for people who know us and love us.
We give thanks for Jesus, our friend,
who teaches us
what it means to love completely,
even as you love your Son.
May we be a true friend to others,
as Jesus is to us.
Amen.

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