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MORNING DEVOTIONS HAVING GOOD FRIENDS AROUND YOU.

It was the great Muhammad Ali who once said "Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It's not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything." And I think that is such a good explanation of friendship. The meaning of friendship. It's such a big topic, and an important one to think over ... it's a relationship of mutual affection between people that works ... Aristotle once said "True friendship is lasting because it is grounded in good". That is, I think, at the core of a genuine friendship.

Friendship means realizing that another person plays a big role in your life. It means seeing their face brightens your day. It means appreciating their laugh because it wipes away your sadness. You find time to video chat when you're too far away to meet in person. And it also means picking up where you left off, no matter how many days, months, or years it's been. Friendship has so many amazing qualities for good, that if you have a genuine friend, you are most fortunate. Maybe at school, you palled up with another student and found you liked spending time with him/her, and that connection has stayed strong for a long time. At school, it is heartbreaking for a parent to see their child in tears saying 'No-one wants to be my friend' That's difficult, and the boy or girl feels a sense of rejection which can be devastating.

Then there are 'fair weather' friends – those so called friends who don't stay around for long and drop out of your life during a difficult time ...

You may think they're your best friend, but in reality, they're just looking for the next best thing and seem to only be interested in your problems, so that they can have a new hot topic to talk about with the next person that they hang out with. All a bit artificial really ... It just underlines that without at least one friend, We feel alone, disconnected, and isolated without a circle of friends to support, encourage, and share life with. We want to feel safe and accepted.

Studies have shown that **older people with friends** are more likely to live a healthier happier life than those who do not have many close friends. Older people without close friends are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and depression than their counterparts. Although family members are usually the caretakers to the elderly, they often do so out of obligation whereas lifelong friends provide endless joy with no strings attached."

A teacher instructed her class one day to write out what they thought a friend should be. One little boy wrote, "A friend is someone who knows everything about you, but likes you just the same." Because each of us are on a journey, some days are tougher than others and it would be so nice to call a friend to share how we feel. It's not that we expect that person to solve our problems – but just knowing they are there for us is usually enough. It brings healing, restoration, and a renewed sense of hope. There are times when a lifelong friendship is the longest and most meaningful relationship that someone will ever experience. We are often far better at recognizing what it means for someone to be a good friend to us, than we do at what it means to be a good friend to another.

In the Bible we read a fascinating verse in **Proverbs 27:9** "A sweet friendship refreshes the soul." — Did you know that GOD designed us to be in community with each other? None of us are an island to ourselves. Living alone can be difficult and unfulfilling, and a lonely existence ... Friends can see qualities in us that we may not even see for ourselves. Their support, love and godly counsel can help spur us on to be our best. That's why it's important to choose good people as your friend ...

someone who will not drag you down or talk behind your back The truth is not everyone will have your best interest at heart, some are only there to take from you and others are just not the type of company you should keep. You need a genuine friend - and someone who promises to pray for you ...do you have such a friend? How wonderful if you do .. because it means this person will ask God, our Heavenly Father, to bless your life, and He will. Even if you don't feel like praying, a good friend can lift you up to God in prayer..

I feel that it's so important to have the right people around you, people that are likeminded and actually care about you because the times when you need someone, you should be able to reach out to a friend ... and know that, after having this conversation with them, you'll be fine and have more clarity. Because that's what friends are for. There are some people who are inwardly crying out for a friend. They may not say so - they can seem happy, but their mental health is suffering because they haven't had someone to open up to. So let's just be there for people. You should always work on being a better person yourself so that you can pour into your friendships and be a blessing to the people you have in your life.