



## Make It Real Friendship Ministry

We don't usually think of relationships, friendships as a ministry. They happen naturally, usually without our even thinking about the process. Jesus' ministry on earth was a friendship ministry. He met and talked to many people each day. Some friendships were acquaintances- meeting for a few moments; some were casual-sharing a meal at a mutual friend's home, celebrating the Sabbath together; some developed into close relationships; and a few became more intimate. No matter the level of friendship, Jesus met people where their needs were. That is our ministry as well.

Every person we encounter should be viewed as a divine appointment. How you interact with others is a direct relationship to how you interact with and view God, His view of you, and His view of others.



### Acquaintance (Surface)

Acquaintances are the people you see on occasion but don't really interact with on a regular basis.

- Learn and remember names
- Ask general "public" information questions
- Listen
- Make eye contact
- Don't get too personal
- Be genuine
- Let Abba's love shine out through your words and actions!



### Casual

Casual friendships often spring up easily: neighbors chatting over the fence, parents attending sporting events, women attending the same church.

At this level we are 'testing the waters'. Is this person similar to me? Do I like them? Do we have common goals and interests?

- Listen and be attentive
- Ask open-ended questions
- Be real
- Be aware of boundaries for both of you
- Respect where the other person is at emotionally, spiritually, and relationally
- Reciprocate appropriately- relationships are about giving and getting.
- Live what you believe. Don't preach!
- Ask if you can pray for the person when concerns are revealed.



### Close

Some (but not all!) friendships will naturally develop into closer relationships. This is the group of women you enjoy spending time with, sharing some of your life with, and generally trust. There is more self-disclosure and life-event sharing at this level.

Being close to someone doesn't mean you can ignore good friendship rules though!

- Continue to listen well
- Ask questions that will deepen understanding
- Be genuine and authentic. Share from the heart not the head.
- Assess the safety of relationships - what amount of disclosure is safe and appropriate for each friend?
- Be a friend, reciprocate friendship
- Establish boundaries
- Do activities that will provide uplifting shared experiences
- Pray with and for and about each other



### Intimate

The fourth and deepest level of friendship should be based on a commitment to generously invest in one another's lives with the goal of helping each other mature in Godly character.

- Be honest
- Be humble
- Assess safety
- Respect boundaries
- Comfort one another
- Pray diligently for one another
- Provide loving correction
- Be faithful
- Be loyal
- Encourage one another to pursue spiritual maturity.