

Becoming a Caring Friend

Philippians 2:19–30;

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12

Even though Paul was experiencing hardship, he gave more attention to the needs of others than his own.

Paul was loved and sustained by so many Christian people,

because he cared about other people.

Principles that we can learn from Paul to care for other people.

1. Paul cultivated a genuine interest in others.

*I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. **Philippians 2:19***

It is rare to care about other people as much as you care for yourself.

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Philippians 2:3-4***

Two outcomes when you put other people's interests ahead of your own

1. You forget your problems, while serving others

*and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. **Isaiah 58:10***

The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Isaiah 58:11

2. Friends will reinforce you, in your time of need

A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. **Proverbs 11:25**

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17

2. Paul offered sincere encouragement to others.

Principles that we can learn from Paul to care for other people.

I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. **Philippians 2:20**

For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

Philippians 2:20 (NASB)

How Paul encourages Timothy

1. Timothy is **special**.

"I have no one else like him."

2. Timothy is **unselfish**.

“He takes as genuine interest in your welfare.”

3. Timothy is **dependable**.

“He has proven himself.”

4. Timothy is **a servant**.

“As a son with a father, he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”

*If you find honey, eat just enough— too much of it, and you will vomit. **Proverbs 25:16***

*An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up. **Proverbs 12:25***

*Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **Romans 12:15***

*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. **Hebrews 3:13***

3. Practice an unselfish release of people.

Principles that we can learn from Paul to care for other people.

But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.

Philippians 2:25

*For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. **Philippians 2:26***

Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to

spare me sorrow upon sorrow.

Philippians 2:27

Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.

Philippians 2:28

*Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me. **Philippians 2:29-30***

When you face hardship, you need a friend.

1. Take a genuine interest in other people
2. Become an encourager
3. Give friends some space
4. Respect them enough to give them freedom

*At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. **2 Timothy 4:16***

But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.

2 Timothy 4:17

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24