

Weekend Teaching Discussion Guide

Find Friends and Freedom

Teaching by Pastor Drew

WARM-UP QUESTION

When you think about the friendships that have impacted your life the most, what made those relationships meaningful or life-changing?

DISCUSS

1. Created for Connection

Pastor Drew opened by reminding us that the foundation of a life worth living lies in the relationships God designed for us. From the very beginning, humanity was created in the image of a relational God.

“So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 1:27 NLT

God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, showing that connection has always been part of His design.

“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.’”

Genesis 2:18 NLT

Pastor Drew referenced the movie *Cast Away* as a picture of what happens when relationships are missing from our lives. Isolation creates chaos, while healthy connections bring life.

- Why do you think relationships are such an essential part of being human?
- In what ways do you see people struggling with loneliness or isolation today?
- How does understanding God as relational change the way we view friendship and community?

2. Five Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Pastor Drew shared five characteristics that help relationships grow in healthy ways.

Healthy relationships start with a healthy heart

“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart.”

Luke 6:45 NLT

- Why does the condition of our heart affect every relationship we have?
- What are some practical ways we can allow God to shape our heart and character?

Healthy relationships require love and respect

“This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.”

John 15:12 NLT

Pastor Drew reminded us that love is more than emotion. It is action and character.

- Why is love easier to talk about than to consistently live out?
- What does respect look like in friendships, marriage, family, or church relationships?

Healthy relationships need honest communication

“Instead, we will speak the truth in love.”

Ephesians 4:15 NLT

“Think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.”

Hebrews 10:24 NLT

- Why can honest conversations feel difficult or uncomfortable?
- How can we create relationships where people feel safe enough to be honest?

Healthy relationships require forgiveness

“Make allowance for each other’s faults and forgive anyone who offends you.”

Colossians 3:13 NLT

- Why is forgiveness necessary in every close relationship?
- What makes forgiveness challenging at times?

Healthy relationships grow through commitment

“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.”

Proverbs 27:17 NLT

Pastor Drew shared that meaningful friendships do not just happen overnight. They are built intentionally over time.

- Why does commitment matter in friendships today?
- How have long-term friendships shaped your life?

3. Friends and Freedom

Pastor Drew shared that significant life changes often happen in the context of relationships. Both positive and negative influences shape who we become.

He pointed to the story in Mark 2 where four friends carried a paralyzed man to Jesus, changing his life forever through their faith and persistence.

The early church also modeled deep connection and a shared life.

“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.”

Romans 12:5 NLT

Pastor Drew explained that true freedom happens when we have people around us where:

- We do not have to pretend
- We can be our genuine selves
- We can share both victories and struggles
- We know we are loved and supported

- Why do you think authenticity feels so freeing?
- What keeps people from being honest about struggles or weaknesses?
- How can we become the kind of friend who creates a safe, healthy community for others?

4. Relationships Shape Our Direction

Pastor Drew reminded us that the people closest to us influence the direction of our lives. Relationships can pull us toward growth or toward unhealthy patterns.

Pastor Drew’s friend, Kim, shared with him:

“It doesn’t just happen, it starts with me.”

She also shared that healthy friendships are “the greatest boomerang gifts ever.”

- How have relationships positively shaped your faith or character?
- Have you ever experienced a friendship or community that pushed you away from healthy choices?
- What does it look like to intentionally pursue healthy, life-giving friendships?

CLOSING REFLECTION

Which statement best reflects where you are right now?

- I need to invite God to work on my heart first.
- I need to grow in honesty and vulnerability with trusted people.
- I need to pursue healthier, more intentional friendships.
- I need to forgive someone in order for a relationship to heal.
- I need to become the kind of friend who encourages freedom and growth in others.

PRAYER

Close by thanking God for creating us for relationship and connection. Thank Him for the gift of healthy friendships, family, and church community. Ask Him to help us become people who love well, communicate honestly, forgive freely, and stay committed to one another. Pray for friendships that lead people closer to Jesus and create spaces where others can experience genuine freedom and belonging.