

Friendship

from *Heart to Heart: Fourteen Gatherings for Reflection and Sharing*

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UU Community Church of Santa Monica

Small Group Ministry

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Welcome and Explanations 5 minutes

Chalice Lighting

[N]one of us ever really walks in another's shoes or knows the innermost rooms of a person's heart. None of us truly knows the lonely places of another's journey or the causes of the lines around another's eyes. Therefore, let us be gentle with one another. Let us listen more than we speak and accept more than we judge. Let our open, outstretched hands reach and touch that we may walk along together for a little while in friendship and in trust.

-- Elizabeth Tarbox

Check in / On Our Hearts 20 minutes

Covenant

Our covenant includes a description of how we want to be with each other, ground rules for our time together, and our expectations for members of our group.

Readings

Remember no [one] is a failure who has friends.

--*It's a Wonderful Life*

I get glimpses of myself in other people's eyes. I try to be careful whom I use as a mirror: my husband, my children; my mother; the friends of my right hand.

--Madeline L'Engle

Those truly linked don't need correspondence. When they meet again after many years apart, their friendship is as true as ever.

--Deng Ming-Dao

Let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another, but make not a bond of love.

--Kahlil Gibran

Questions for consideration:

1. Describe one of your all-time best friends. What are some of the qualities that make this person such a good friend? How did you meet? This person might not necessarily be a soul mate, but does have a special place in your heart.
2. When, if ever, did you learn that you had to give your friends space to be themselves? When, if ever, did you feel you needed more space? If you have had to ask for better boundaries in a relationship, how did the other person respond?
3. Reflect on a time when you were hurt deeply by a friend or hurt a friend. Did you work through the hurt?
4. Instead of giving advice and fixing our problems, some friends are able to listen with an open heart. If you have experienced this kind of friend, how did those moments feel? If you have tried to be this kind of friend, how did that go?

Sharing 60 minutes

Closing Activity / Reflecting On Our Time Together

Please share how you showed up in our time together. Do you wish you had said something more, less, different? How are you leaving our time together? Feeling words are ok: sad, mad, glad, peaceful, powerful, joyful.

Closing Words

A friend is one to whom one may pour out all the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

-- Dinah Craik