

Friends

I don't know how people who are alone function without the contact of friends, family, or neighbors. I have some friends that I have known for most of my life, 70 some years. Many are gone. Some friends that I have known for less time but are in my life now. I spoke with a friend not long ago that I have known for over 70 years. It always amazes me that it is like picking up a conversation that we are continuing from yesterday. We met in Nurses Training. We were both unable to swim and were very thin. She learned to swim I didn't. We both ate little but shared eggs. She liked only the white portion, and I liked the yoke. She would eat two whites and I would eat 2 yokes. We both went through heart aches and trials. Our friendship has lasted with her living up north and me living here. We have only seen each other a few times in these last years, less than years ago. We were better at physically connecting a long time ago, but families, jobs, and distance have kept us apart. Now we use the phone. I also have friends from right now. Some are younger (although not by much, the things we have known are still relatable and we share memories of how it used to be) and have been so good to me. Even my hairdresser this week reminded me that she has been doing my hair for over 24 years. My friends and I go out to lunch, they insist on driving me to doctor appointments and even though I tell them, I can do it myself, they come with me, and I am so grateful. There are those who remember me when there are evening services at church, and they know I no longer like to drive after dark and they offer me a ride. I went out to lunch three times this week and enjoyed it so much. I have been able to get out more and that is a blessing and to get out with friends is a double blessing. As I was thinking of my good fortune with friends I thought about Jesus. He, of course, had the 12. They traveled together, ate together, slept together, and he taught them and prepared them for their mission. Jesus also had friends that he could visit with, even though he was still the teacher. He had Lazarus and Mary and Martha. He stayed with them and talked with them. Mary had washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. When Lazarus had died Jesus came and raised him from the dead. John 11:5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. John 11:35 Jesus wept.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of friends and for the memories we share with those we've known for so long. We thank you for new friends and for the joy they bring into our lives. We thank you for our church, for our Pastor and ask your blessings on him and his family, and for those who work so diligently to do those things that further your kingdom and our service to our community. We thank you for those who use our Pantry and for those who leave things for others. We thank you for those who seek comfort in the veteran's memorial, and we thank you for their service. Be with those who are alone, may we reach out to them and comfort them. Be with our country Lord, bring us together and may we find kindness and tolerance in each other. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson