

BETWEEN FRIENDS

SMALL TALK ABOUT THE BIG THINGS

PART 1: EXPECTATIONS AND EMPATHY

We all want to have friendships that are both fun and meaningful. Sometimes it's complicated because we bring our own wiring, life experiences, and expectations into our relationships. And if we're not careful, those things can put barriers between us rather than bringing us closer together. So, what can we do to be the best version of ourselves and find the kind of community and friendship we're looking for?

CONNECT

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions as a group:

1. When you think about your own wiring, life experiences and expectations, what kinds of qualities are you looking for in a friend?
2. How easy or challenging has it been for you to find deep friendships over the years. Use a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being easy and 1 being challenging).

LEARN

Watch the video for Part 1: Expectations and Empathy.

APPLY

Discuss the following questions as a group:

1. In the video, Esther said, "Not all people will be your people." Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?
2. Debbie talked about two different kinds of friends: Commiserate Friends and Cheerleader Friends. Commiserating friends are people who don't shy away from hard things and will "get in the pit with you" when you're hurting. Cheerleader friends are people who are a lot of fun, but are uncomfortable when things aren't happy and positive. These friends often feel a need to put a "bow" on a situation immediately, rather than allowing you to feel your feelings. How have you experienced these kinds of friends over the years? Do you have commiserating friends that are a safe place for you to be open and vulnerable?
3. When you think about yourself as a friend, do you think you're more of a commiserating friend or cheerleader friend?



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4. Sometimes the hurt and pain we experience in a friendship can lead to greater self-awareness and empathy for others. Has this been true in your life? If so, share your story with the group.
5. Read together. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (**Ephesians 4:32**). In the video, Debbie pointed out that when we generously extend grace and empathy to someone else, it feels really good. How have you experienced that in your life?

PRAY

Take a few minutes to allow group members to share any prayer requests and then end in prayer.

BEFORE NEXT TIME

This week, find ways to extend grace and empathy to people in your life. Give a generous explanation when you don't know the whole story. Choose to assume the best. Give the benefit of the doubt. Be ready to share your experience with the group the next time you're together.

