



# FINDING FRIENDSHIPS

## 7 Practical Tips for Building Deeper Connections

*Finding friendships is hard work, especially for adults! It is even more difficult when you throw in stay at home orders and social distancing. Remember when you were a kid, it was so easy to make friends and claim BFF status after just a few minutes of climbing on the jungle gym together? At some point though, regardless of a pandemic, we lost that carefree attitude. We became insecure and worried about what people would think of us if they really knew us. So, maybe we just stopped trying. It's time to reclaim that childhood innocence and step out with boldness. Having real relationships that matter is an important part of our well-being, and besides, God designed us to be in community with others! So, go for it. Read this guide, and take your first step today to start making connections with the people around you, and see what happens.*

**“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”**

– Psalm 133:1

### **TIP #1: Get out front**

Remember the days when houses had front porches as a place where family and neighbors gathered? Now we all drive into our garages and hit that remote to get the door to close before anyone sees us. Why are we hiding? We are missing opportunities to build relationships with people God has put right next to us. So get out front! Pull up a few chairs in your driveway and let the kids play in the front yard. Get out the sidewalk chalk, the basketball hoop, build a skateboard ramp, and say hello to your neighbors when they walk by. One blessing this pandemic has brought us is the amount of people sitting on front porches, playing out front, and walking the neighborhood (six feet apart).

### **TIP #2: Be open to connection**

You can't expect to build connection if you have a wall up keeping people out. That means put your phone away, look up, smile, start a conversation. It can be something as simple as saying hello to your neighbor while sitting out front or taking a walk. You could even take it a step further and place a note in your neighbors' mailboxes, sharing your phone number and inviting them to text you if they feel isolated. Show others that you are interested in them and see how quickly it breaks down walls.

### **TIP #3: Look for others who share your passion**

Are you a golfer or a grill master? Practice your swing in the front yard or grill some burgers in the driveway. When you see a neighbor, start a conversation. Are you blessed with musical talent? Play for the people on your street, and invite them to sing along (at a reasonable hour, of course). Investing in your own talents and passions is not only great for self-care, but it opens the doors to connect with like-minded people. Wherever you find yourself, make a point to introduce yourself to one new person each week.

### **TIP #4: Assess your current friendships**

Examine the friendships you currently have in your life, and determine if you'd like to invest deeper into some of them or distance yourself from others. Ideally you will want to find friends who care about you, who want God's best for you, and who you enjoy being around. Start by picking up your phone and scrolling through your contacts list. Make a list of people you already know who you would want to build closer relationships with, and start reaching out to those people on a regular basis.

# FINDING FRIENDSHIPS

## 7 Practical Tips for Building Deeper Connections

### **TIP #5: Reach out to someone you admire**

Is there someone you look up to and would love to get to know? Most people are honored when they feel like they have something to offer and would happily accept an invitation to coffee to share their expertise on a subject they are passionate about. If the thought of reaching out seems awkward at first, start the conversation off on the right foot by simply complimenting them on the trait you admire most about them. Ask them questions. Get curious about who they are and watch what happens. People love to be around other people who make them feel great about themselves.

### **TIP #6: Schedule time to invest in friendships**

Juggling multiple roles such as homeschool teacher, parent, remote employee, or caregiver, plus being in the midst of a pandemic, can make it easy to put your social life on the back burner. If you schedule everything else in your day, why not schedule in time for friends each week? You can start small by adding 3 friends' names to your weekly to do list, and make a point to call or text them. It doesn't have to be a deep conversation, but just a simple way to let them know that you were thinking of them. Send a funny picture, an encouraging Bible verse, or ask a question that you know they will have an answer to. Then once a month, schedule a virtual lunch or coffee date with a friend as you build these relationships.

### **TIP #7: Be okay with not being okay**

Being authentic is the fastest way to break down walls and really get to know someone. Don't wait for your life to look perfect to let someone in, or you might be very lonely in your quest for perfection. Others want to feel safe in sharing without the risk of judgment for their past mistakes or even their present situation. When you are having conversations with someone who is walking through some difficult stuff, it's okay to let them know that you understand what it feels like to be broken and hurting too. It's also a great opportunity to shine the spotlight on God and offer hope by sharing how He has brought redemption in your life. Believe it or not, being open about your own flaws and shortcomings actually makes you more relatable and encourages vulnerability and intimacy in relationships! Authenticity builds connection.

