

# Old Friends

*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly*  
*Proverbs 18:24 (KJV)*

Yesterday I had the privilege of preaching at a church that I had not visited for almost 20 years. The Lord graciously met with us and the people responded well to my preaching. I was blessed to be there among Christians who have loved and prayed for me for many years.

Now if I had told you that I saw a number of old friends yesterday you would not be sure what I meant. For example I might have meant I saw people in their 70's 80's or even 90's. On the other hand you might have understood me to mean I had seen people I have known for some years. Those people might be considerably younger and in their 30's or 40's.

Well, I saw both kinds of friends. All knew me for 25-30 years at least and some were well into their 80's. It was such a blessed time to reacquaint myself with these people and to make some new friends. I look forward to returning soon to speak more about our wonderful Saviour and His work for us.

Being a member of that church in the 1970's to about 1992 I had ministered to many of the members in different ways. I had done scores of weddings and funerals, so some of the occasions were happy and some sad. Over the years I am certain that I had been in over 100 homes of members there as I took the comfort and teaching of Scripture to the people in various circumstances of life.

As I reflected warmly on yesterday morning the verse we have for today came to mind. I was recognized as a friend of the congregation because I showed myself friendly to members and leadership so often in the course of my ministry, years earlier. Thus, we were friends.

Then too, a number of the families I met yesterday had shown themselves especially friendly to me in my times of need. I even said to one man, "You showed yourself a friend when I really needed friends. Thank you." I reminded a fine Christian lady how she had suggested to me a new feature to add

to our worship Sunday mornings and how I had incorporated it to everyone's benefit. She had forgotten all about it until I reminded her.

If you are finding life lonely because you do not have friends, think about our verse for today. I have friends, in part, simply because it is my job to come alongside people and help them walk through a tough time in life. Other people I simply got alongside because they were interesting and friendly themselves.

You will not likely have friends to enjoy if you do not reach out to others and make a consistent effort to get to know them, find ways to help them, and demonstrate a caring attitude toward them. Show yourself friendly and you will have friends in abundance. More than that, you will demonstrate the loving character of Jesus Himself.

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