

Love is a many splendoured thing 2

Friendship

In many times and places, friendship was and is considered the highest form of love.

Friendship is freely chosen

“You can’t choose your relations, but you can choose your friends.”

David and Jonathan

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father’s house. ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. (1 Sam 18. 1-4)

Ruth and Naomi

¹⁶ *“Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried.” (Ruth 1.16-17)*

Male and female friendships are different

The David and Jonathan story is the classic heroic “fight or flight” scenario. The Ruth and Naomi story is much more of the “tend and befriend” model.

Friendship is exclusive

When I say that this person is my friend, it implies that that person isn’t.

Male friendship is usually about something in common; a shared profession, or interest, etc.

Friendship helps us discover who we are

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. (Gen 2.18)

We usually take that verse to refer to marriage, but the principle is wider than that.

There are aspects of people that we can only know in their relationships with others.

Friendship gives us all the opportunity to see ourselves reflected in the eyes of another.

The bottom line

“A person with many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24)

You don’t need a lot of friends but we all need a few close friends; people who know us well, who share the same interests, who will stick by us.

¹⁰ *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, their friend can help them up. But pity the one who falls and has no one to help them up! (Ecclesiastes 4.9-10)*