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## Be a Friend

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Sat, Apr 17, 2021 at 2:32 PM

Hi there, friend,

If I could use one of those fancy email programs that automatically puts your name in wherever I tell it to, I would, but we don't have that functionality in the church system yet. And now it happens so much these days that it doesn't have as much impact as it used to when it first was available. But still, people like to see their name, and I'd like you to feel that this was a personal email from me to you, even if you know I'm sending it out to the whole ward.

So I use 'friend' instead. Because I'd like to think we're friends, or I'll bet we could be if we got to know each other.

It's interesting that the church missionary department has stopped using the term 'investigator' to refer to people who are learning about the church. Do you know what term they use now instead? "Friend."

For us who have been using a certain term for so long, it seems a little strange, but if you think about it, that is one of the best words to use.

If you think about who your friends are, they are people you can communicate with, enjoy being around, and who might have something in common with you. It's a good relationship. And so, really, we'd like to be friends with everyone. That doesn't mean we agree about everything or have everything in common. Just at least one thing (which might only be being together in the same place.)

And because there is opposition in all things, if we can have friends, we can have the opposite, which I suppose would be called enemies. (At least that's the scriptural term.)

So, we can have friends at work, school, or our community around any number of subjects or situations, and yet they may not be friends with the church.

And since our lives are based on our fundamental beliefs, which drive our actions, we can show that the church and doctrines are an integral part of our lives, and that gives us happiness and meaning. And therefore, people who are friends with us can more easily be a friend to the church, rather than an enemy.

So, missionary work is to help more people become friends with the church and doctrines.

Our prophet and the apostles are very good at this. They are forming partnerships with leaders of other churches around common beliefs and missions, to help those in need and other similar efforts to increase faith throughout the world. They are not trying to get those leaders baptized into our church (although I'm sure they'd love that) they are only trying to make friends. They are creating more friends of the church.

So, that's all they're asking us to do, to make more friends.

And what do we do with friends? We love them, share things with them, and invite them into our lives. It's a very natural thing to do.

And that's the focus of missionary work in the church now. Sure, we'd love them to meet with the missionaries, but only when they are ready and willing to. Before that, we just need to be friends, and do what friends do.

The church has some great videos that help us see how easy and natural it is to share the gospel in today's world. Check out the videos in the links on this page:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/how-to-share?lang=eng>

I know it can be difficult to talk about the church sometimes, especially when there are so many misconceptions and untruth that is spread out there in the world.

But that's not new.

When Phillip, one of Jesus' disciples, told his friend Nathanael about Jesus, Nathanael was skeptical, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

What prejudice did he have about Nazareth? What history about the people or the city caused Nathanael to say that? He had a preconceived idea, and whether it was true or not, based on the past, it caused him to pass judgement on the possibility of the future, and the truth, that the Messiah could come out of Nazareth.

So how did Phillip overcome that barrier?

He just said, "Come and see."

That's all we need to do.

Jesus will take care of the rest. That's what He did for Nathanael. When they met for the first time, Jesus said something that caused Nathanael to say, "thou are the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." (John 1:45-51)

People will feel the spirit of truth and love as we invite them into our lives and become friends.

And if they don't. That's fine. We can still be friends.

It's good to have friends.

Thank you for being a friend.

Bishop Williams

P.S.

Here's another important link with resources for sharing the gospel:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/sharing-the-gospel?lang=eng>

Tomorrow we are having virtual Sunday School for both the adults and the youth at 10:15am. See links below.

Instead of meeting in different classes, the youth will all be together in one Zoom meeting. Here is the link:

**Youth Sunday School:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/94364643387?pwd=WC8xdHhVQjdKTHprbEVJM2VvUWR0UT09>

Meeting ID: 943 6464 3387

Passcode: 3023

**Adult Sunday School:**

<https://zoom.us/j/95397954066?pwd=VmQ1REh1U0FPQkpwWjk4VnhIR2p1Zz09>

Or join by phone: (253)215-8782

Meeting ID: 953 9795 4066

Passcode: 1820

And as usual, our Sacrament meeting will be at 9:00am in person for all members or online here:

<https://zoom.us/j/92685846361>

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You received this email because you made your email address available to your local Church leaders. It was sent by Rex Williams, whose calling is Bishop.