



AGAINST THE ROPES: Friends in Your Corner



BIG IDEA

Investing in relationships today ensures you'll have valuable support when you need to make withdrawals in the future.



ICE BREAKER

If you were in a boxing match who would be the four friends you'd choose to be in your corner helping you through the fight?



MAIN POINTS

- Christianity is fundamentally a "team sport" that requires community and mutual support.
- Our ability to form deep friendships naturally decreases as we age, with studies showing a significant decline in close connections over the past two decades.
- True friendship means being available in crisis, willing to be vulnerable, and committed to supporting each other through life's difficulties.
- The Bible emphasizes numerous "one another" commands that demonstrate we are meant to live in genuine, supportive relationships that go beyond surface-level interactions.
- Investing in relationships before you need support is crucial. The time to build your support team is before you're "flat on your back" and struggling, not during the moment of crisis.



DISCUSS

1. When have you felt "against the ropes" in life?
2. What makes it difficult to ask for help during challenging times?
3. How can vulnerability strengthen our relationships?
4. Reflect on the "one another" commands in the Bible:
 - Which of these (love, encourage, serve, forgive) do you find most challenging?
 - How can you intentionally practice these in your relationships?
5. Why do people often struggle to form deep friendships as adults?
6. Questions to consider:
 - Who are your "refrigerator friends" (those who can enter your home freely)?
 - When was the last time you were truly vulnerable with a friend?
 - How can you invest in relationships before you need support?
7. Who would you call in a crisis at 2 AM?
8. When was the last time you allowed a friend to speak truth into your life?
9. How can you be a better support for others this week?



NEXT STEP

Choose one practical way to invest in friendship this week:

- Send an encouraging message to someone
- Schedule a meaningful catch-up conversation
- Join a small group at CentralAZ.com/groups
- Join a volunteer team at CentralAZ.com/volunteer

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their



SCRIPTURE

work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Mark 2:3-4 Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.



**NEXT WEEK
SNEAK PEAK**

Join us next week and invite a friend as we continue the series called Against the Ropes!

Questions or Feedback? Email Groups@CentralAZ.com