

## **“PEOPLE DON’T WANT A FRIENDLY CHURCH ...”**

As you read the title you were probably questioning it. Is it true people don’t want a friendly church? If they don’t want a friendly church, why are we always talking about being friendly? If they don’t want a friendly church, what DO they want?

I don’t remember where I heard the quote but I believe it is true: “People don’t want a friendly church. They want a friend.” What does this mean Do people not want a friendly church? Yes, they do, but that is only the beginning—what they are really looking for is a friend. If you are looking for a friend you usually begin with someone who is friendly, not someone who ignores you or is rude to you. But the fact that someone is friendly doesn’t

necessarily mean they will be your friend. Being friendly doesn’t require the sustained effort that being a friend does. It is one thing to be friendly for the 4-5 hours a week that we spend together “at church”. It is quite another to be a friend at not only those times, but at other times during the week. *“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”* (Prov. 18:24) Friends spend time together—that’s what builds their friendship. They may work together, they will certainly worship together, and they may go out to eat, have a picnic, put on a fish fry, play games, or just sit and talk.

Being a friend requires much more than the investment of time—it will require you to listen, to share, and even to open yourself up to another. There is an emotional commitment—to share the good times, the bad times, even to correct them when you must. *“As the iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”* (Prov. 27:17) You will probably have to laugh at some of the same jokes over and over (just like they do yours), you will have to not only vent to them, but really listen when they vent to you. *“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born to adversity.”* (Prov. 17:17)

The quote is right—what people really want is a friend, or friends. Are you willing to make the commitment to be a friend to a new Christian, or a new member or family in the congregation? They will benefit, but so will you.

**CAB'S Note: The preceding article was written by brother Tol Burk, whom we help to support as he works for the Lord in Puerto Rico. Brother Burk is scheduled to be at Perry Hill Road on October 28, 2007 to preach to us, report on his work, and to let us get better acquainted with them.**

**His article above touches successfully on a much needed concept that many of us have not applied as assiduously as we should.**

**1 Peter 4:9 (NKJV) *"Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."***