

Please Pray

- ✳ **The Spiritual Significance of the New Year (CWWL 1957, Vol. 1, Chapter 4):** “On the first day of a new year we should realize that the previous year is behind us and that a new year, a new beginning, is before us. The former things have passed away, and all things should be new. In the light of the Lord, our former weaknesses, failures, and mistakes will come to an end, and we need not bring them with us. With a new year we can have a new beginning, a good beginning, starting in resurrection. The meaning of the changing of days, months, and years is related to encountering God as light and to experiencing death and resurrection. We need to meet God, and we need an ending and a new beginning. We should not remain in our old experiences, whether good or bad, because both the good and the bad have been terminated so that we can begin anew.” – May we all spend some time before the Lord and encounter Him as the light to experience death and resurrection for a spiritual New Year. May we all have a new beginning with the start of the new year.
- ✳ **Beginning of Semester Gospel Preaching and Distributions on Different University Campuses:** We will have gospel preaching and Bibles distributions at McGill, HEC, UdeM, and Concordia at the beginning of January. We invite all the saints to join the distributions. May the Lord go before us to brood over the campuses and the metro stations to prepare the hearts of men to make them ready to be harvested. May many be open to receive a gospel tract, a Bible, and have some conversations with us. May many be open to join the Bible studies and have further contacts with us. May the Lord gain materials for His building.
- ✳ **Growing in Life and Propagation:** May we have a heart to enjoy the Lord each day and may the Lord grant us our daily growth in life. Let us pray for one another that we may be brought to maturity, ready for the Lord’s coming. May we also have the Lord’s heart to propagate His word and speak the gospel for the increase and building up of the church.
- ✳ **Burden to Get Into the Life-Studies:** Pray that we may have a heart and hunger to continue in the Life-Studies reading; may the Lord be our perseverance; even if we fall behind, may we be encouraged to press on and resume. May we enter into the burden for digesting the Word and the ministry.
- ✳ **Pray for various local needs in Montréal:** The saints, their contacts, and for the persons in need of care and shepherding.

Weekly Readings

- ✳ Holy Bible Recovery Version with footnotes: Matt. 8:2 – 10:42.
- ✳ HWMR: Knowing, Experiencing, and Enjoying Christ as Revealed in Philippians, Week 4.
- ✳ Life-Study of John, Messages 29 and 30.

Announcements

- ✳ Gospel preaching and Bibles distributions schedule (please contact the serving ones if you would like to join):
 - McGill: Thursday, January 4 (11am-3pm)
 - HEC: Saturday, January 6 (10:30am-12:30pm)
 - UdeM: Monday, January 8 (11am-2pm)
 - Concordia: Monday, January 15 (11am-2pm)
- ✳ The Summer Olympics Games will be returning to Europe in 2024 and will be hosted in Paris, France. We believe that this is a wonderful opportunity prepared by the Lord as the Lord of the harvest. We would encourage all the saints to open to the Lord regarding this next milestone in the Lord’s move in Europe, and we would like to invite the saints in the Lord’s recovery to join us in this labour next year. Please contact brother [Allan Yeow](#) for more information and for the link to the form to express your interest. May we join the Lord in this move by praying, giving, and going.
- ✳ Please consider your needs carefully before the Lord and email your prayer requests to Allan Yeow, allan.yeow81@gmail.com, no later than Wednesday evening of every week. Please also note that due to the limited space in the newsletter, we may not be able to publish all prayer burdens sent to us. May the Lord teach us how to pray for the advancement of His Economy.

Upcoming Events

- ✳ Jan. 4, 6, 8, 15: **Gospel preaching and Bibles distributions on university campuses.**
- ✳ Feb. 10-11, 2024, Taipei, Taiwan: **The 2024 International Chinese-Speaking Blending Conference.**

Please refer to the church’s website where more events are listed.

This Week’s Activities

Sun-Dec-31 LORD’S DAY	♦ 10am-12pm: Lord’s Table and prophesying meetings.
Mon-Jan-01	♦
Tues-Jan-02	♦ 7:30pm-9pm: English, French and Chinese Districts prayer meetings by conference calls.
Wed-Jan-03	♦
Thur-Jan-04	♦ 11am-3pm: Gospel preaching and Bibles distribution on the campus of McGill University.
Fri-Jan-05	♦ 6:30pm-9pm: English, French and Chinese Districts home meetings in person and on Zoom.
Sat-Jan-06	♦ 10:30am-12:30pm: Gospel preaching and Bibles distribution on the campus of HEC.
Sun-Jan-07 LORD’S DAY	♦ 10am-12pm: Lord’s Table and prophesying meetings.

FRIENDS

Scripture Reading: James 4:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Psa. 1; 1 Cor. 15:33

I. The Bible not emphasizing friendship

One thing special about the Bible is that it does not say much about friendship among God's children. This does not mean that the word friend is never used in the Bible. The word is used numerous times in the Old Testament; we find it in Genesis and especially in Proverbs. In the New Testament we find the word in Matthew and Luke. But the friendship spoken of in the Bible primarily refers to friendship outside of Christ; the Bible does not say much about making friends with those who are in the Lord. If I remember correctly, the word friends is spoken of twice in Acts in relation to Christians. In the first instance, some among the Asiarch leaders were Paul's friends. They entreated Paul not to venture into the theater (19:31). In the second instance, Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends to receive care (27:3). In addition to these two verses, 3 John 14 says, "The friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." As far as I know, these are the only three places in Acts and the Epistles that speak about the subject. This shows us that the Bible does not say much about the matter of friendship.

The Bible does not emphasize friendship but instead emphasizes our relationship as brothers and sisters. It emphasizes the relationship of the brothers and sisters in the Lord. This is the basic and primary relationship. The Bible puts much more emphasis on this than on friendship.

II. Friendship being the most important relationship in the world

What does friendship mean? An old man can be a friend to a young man. There can be friendship between husbands and wives. Fathers and sons can be friends with each other, and brothers and sisters also can be friends. Being a friend to someone means loving and communicating with that one; this is the only relationship that counts in a friendship. Among the different kinds of human relationships, there are blood relationships. This kind of relationship exists only between relatives. Friendship, however, is different from such relationships; it is sealed in mutual love. Friendship disregards all other relationships and binds two persons together through love. Friendship often exists between husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter, or teacher and student. Friendship can develop between people of similar age, similar social standing, or similar era.

Friendship is an important relationship for a person who has not believed in the Lord Jesus. Before a person accepts the Lord as Savior, he does not share any spiritual relationship in the Lord. This is why friendship is the most important relationship in the world to him. But among us, friendship is no longer the most important thing. Friendship is rarely mentioned in the New Testament. Our emphasis is on the relationship that exists between us as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Our relationship as friends in the Lord is much less significant. Friendship is not important among God's children.

Before we believe in the Lord, we do not have a spiritual relationship. We only have father and son, mother and daughter, teacher and student, and master and servant relationships. This is why friendship is an important matter to those who have not believed in the Lord. Two persons can be father and son to each other, but they can still have differences in standing. The same can be said of a mother and a daughter, a husband and a wife, and a master and his servant. Everyone can have his or her own standing. Blood relationships, however, are limited in number. Most persons can have between three and five blood relationships; those who have eight and ten such relationships are considered unusual. Other than these relationships, all other contacts are with friends.

Man cannot be satisfied with family relationships alone. He cannot be satisfied with the teacher-student relationship or any other social relationship alone. Man needs friendship. Friendship is based on love, not on the blood relationship. Many of our human relationships are inherited from birth; only friendship is by personal choice. This is why friendship is a most important matter to an unbeliever. Everyone has friends. A person can have three, five, eight, or ten friends. He can have dozens or hundreds of friends if he is sociable enough. He can enjoy companionship, love, and fellowship among these friends. Friendship indeed occupies an important place in an unbeliever's life.

If an unbeliever does not have any friends, he must not be a very likable person. He may be somewhat abnormal or have a sick personality; he may be very hard to get along with; or perhaps his untrustworthiness or peculiarities have discouraged others from making friends with him. Under normal circumstances, a man always has friends.

Note: This content is extracted from CWWN, Vol. 49, Messages for Building Up New Believers (2), Chapter 34, *FRIENDS*, by Watchman Nee, published by Living Stream Ministry, available at <http://www.ministrybooks.org>.