

Group Conversation Guide

Week of January 15, 2025

Series: Renew: Building Relationships God's Way
Title: Renew: Five Star Friendship

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- Watch or attend this week's message from Pastor Mark Ragsdale at churchatviera.com/live.

BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION

Icebreaker

If your closest relationships had a Google Review, how many stars would they get, and why?

STUDY TOGETHER

God's Vision for Deep Friendship

Read Song of Songs 5:16 (NLT)

- What stands out to you about the connection between love and friendship in this verse?
- Why do you think God values friendship so deeply in our most important relationships?

THE FIVE STARS OF BIBLICAL FRIENDSHIP

★ First Star – Intimate Insiders

Read Genesis 2:21–24 (NLT)

- What does this passage reveal about God's design for intimacy and unity?
- What are the differences between:
 - *Back to Back* relationships
 - *Shoulder to Shoulder* relationships
 - *Face to Face* relationships
- Why is *face-to-face* connection essential for spiritual and relational health?

Read Exodus 33:11 (NLT)

- What does it mean that God spoke to Moses “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend”?
- How does this shape the way we pursue intimacy with God and others?

★ Second Star – Purpose Partners

Read Genesis 2:18 (NLT)

- Why does God say it is “not good” for man to be alone?
- How does purpose strengthen friendship?

Read Genesis 1:27–28 (NIV)

- How does a shared mission deepen relationships?
- Where has God called you to walk in purpose with others rather than alone?

★ Third Star – Adversity Advocates

Read Proverbs 17:17 (NIV)

- What does this verse teach us about friendship during hardship?
- How have you seen friendship tested—or strengthened—by adversity?

★ Fourth Star – Dedicated Devotees

Read Proverbs 18:24 (NIV)

- What is the difference between having many companions and having faithful friends?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NIV)

- What benefits of committed friendship stand out to you in this passage?
- How does this scripture challenge our culture’s tendency toward independence?

★ Fifth Star – Soul Shapers

Read Ephesians 5:25–27 (ESV)

- How does Christ’s love for the church model how we should shape one another spiritually?
- In what ways do healthy relationships help refine and sanctify us?

Read Proverbs 27:6, 9 (NLT)

- Why is honest correction a gift in true friendship?
- How can loving truth deepen trust rather than damage it?

"A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers." — Ruth Bell Graham

- Why is forgiveness essential for long-term, renewing relationships?

GOD'S DESIGN FOR RENEWING RELATIONSHIPS

Five-Star Friendship reflects God's heart for:

- **Intimacy over isolation**
- **Purpose over convenience**
- **Loyalty over comfort**
- **Commitment over convenience**
- **Transformation over surface-level connection**

APPLY TOGETHER

- Which "star" do you sense God inviting you to strengthen right now?
- How can our group become a place of Five-Star Friendship?

WORSHIP TOGETHER

By Our Love - Christy Nockels - <https://youtu.be/AhSoTtJnfJ8?si=QEsycae8-WfPU62t>

PRAY TOGETHER

- Thank God for His gift of friendship and community.
- Ask the Lord to renew your relationships according to His design.
- Pray for courage to pursue deeper, healthier, Christ-centered friendships.