**Sermon Notes**

**“Solitude and Spiritual Friendship”**

Ephesians 5:1–2
1 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**What solitude is and why is important?**

*Solitude is the intentional withdrawal from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.”* Mark 6:31

*Why is solitude important?*

1. Solitude helps us to become more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God’s voice and promptings.

2. Solitude helps us develop greater \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that can only be received in solitude.

4. Solitude deepens \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**What spiritual friendship is and why is it important?**

Spiritual friendship (i.e. “fellowship”) is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that develops when two people \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in their discipleship to Jesus.

The shared journey of spiritual friendship is marked by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to speak the truth in love to each other (Ephesians 4:15)
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in carrying one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to confess their sins/faults to one another (James 5:16).

*Why are spiritual friendships important?*

1. We are not meant to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
2. Spiritual friendships are a life-line in times of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 18:15)
3. Spiritual friendship is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of discipleship. (John 15:9-15)

*“A rule I have had for years is: to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have.”* D.L. Moody

Questions for Discussion:

1. What new or new-to-me idea stood out to you from this message?
2. There were four reasons given for why solitude is important. Which have you found to be the most personally relevant in your own life?
3. Has forming deep spiritual friendships come easily to you in your life? Why or why not?
4. What are the short and long-term consequences of ignoring the spiritual disciplines of solitude and spiritual friendship?
5. What steps can you take this week to grow in one or both of these disciplines?