

I love spending time with my old friends. Not old is in calendar years, even though we spend an awful lot of time talking about Medicare, donut holes, and supplemental insurance. No, I mean old as in not new. As in friends since our teenage years. Over the years, we've seen each other cry till we laugh and laugh till we cry. We've listened to each other's recitations of aches and pains and we've visited each other in the hospital when those aches and pains became serious. We've upheld each other through births and deaths, and we even know the names of each other's grandchildren. Yes, I truly love these old friends.

My old friends and I have one important thing in common: we're expert "Restaurant Researchers." Restaurants are the subjects of some of our most meaningful conversations. "You should go to that new restaurant, *Patty's Platter*. Their hamburgers are great." "Have you been to *Frenchie's*? I've heard their homemade croissants are out of this world." "Stay away from *Porky's Pig Sty*. It really is a pig sty, if you know what I mean." "Where are we going to meet next time? Want to try *Napoleon's Ice Cream Store*? It's on the corner of Waterloo Boulevard and Trafalgar Square."

(Disclaimer, folks: Terre Haute has no eating establishments called *Patty's Platter* or *Frenchie's* or *Porky's Pig Sty*. Not to my knowledge, anyway. Although I would be willing to try anything that might appear on the menu at *Napoleon's*. That is if I can find the intersection of Waterloo and Trafalgar.)

Restaurant habits aside, I share something spectacular with my old friends: the passage of time. In this fast-paced culture in which we find ourselves, we tend to yearn for quality friendships. We want and need friends, confidants, someone who will sit with us in the emergency room, and pray with us while a loved one is having emergency surgery. We waste a lot of time looking for friends when we should spend time becoming friends.

Thankfully, I'm not old enough to have spent time forming a friendship with Aristotle. He understood what was needed to mold a friendship. He said, "Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow-ripening fruit." To build a friendship, you must spend time with the ones you want to be friends with. A slow-ripening fruit kind of time.

We read in John 15:14-15 that Jesus calls us His friends. We want to be friends with Him, but to do that, we must spend time with Him. We must get to know Him, His qualities, His

attributes, what makes Him happy and what makes Him sad. We need to listen to Him as much as we talk to Him. And that takes time.

We understand that in order to have earthly friends, we must not neglect them, but earnestly seek ways to spend time with them. It's the same with Jesus. A friendship with Him is formed when we earnestly seek Him and take the time to spend the time with Him. A slow slow-ripening fruit kind of time.