

Who Is a Good Friend? (part 1 of 2)

Description: A two-part lesson on having good, close Muslims friends. Part 1 discusses the importance of good friends.

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Published on 23 Feb 2015 - Last modified on 25 Jun 2019

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Objectives:

- To understand the role played by friends in our lives.
- To understand the importance of good Muslims friends and the influence of bad friends.

Arabic Terms:

- *Shaytan*- sometimes spelled *Shaitan* or *Shaytaan*. It is the word used in Islam and the Arabic language to denote the devil or Satan, the personification of evil.

Much of our lives is spent in interaction with others. A structure of friendship can be represented by three concentric circles that can be described as very close, close, and not-so-close but still meaningful personal ties. An acquaintance will be in the 'not-so-close' category, someone you exchange small talk with as you go about your day, trade insights with online, or chat about sports. They will be people who cross our paths regularly like coworkers, classmates, and people we run into at the gym.



Close friendships, on the other hand, display strong support and affection. A close friend fills an indispensable role as a confidant, someone who listens and pays attention to you, is willing to help you, and has shared interests. A close friend is someone you trust and who shares a deeper level of understanding and communication with you; someone you can rely on, someone you can really connect with, and someone with whom you share a bond of trust and loyalty. No price tag on earth can be placed on their value and how much they mean to you. What makes a close friend different from a very close one? The answer is the level and extent you are able to confide deeply.

Importance of Developing Muslim Friendships

Muslim friends can provide tremendous emotional support and human contact that fulfill need for human companionship and reinforcement. The pull of healthy friendships

can have an enormous effect on the quality of our lives. With growing numbers of people living alone, either by choice or circumstance, friendships occupy the emotional space that other people fill with spouses or significant others. Friends can link us to broader social networks and help enrich our lives.

There is no better way to judge ourselves than by the company we keep. Even our Prophet did not go somewhere without any companions. He kept constant good company, even though he was aided by Allah Himself. The people who were by his side were guaranteed the highest place in Paradise. For example, Abu Bakr was his best friend even before Allah selected the Prophet to be His messenger. During his prophethood, he took two great journeys, one on earth and another to the heavens. When he migrated from the city of Mecca to Madina, he was accompanied by his closest companion, Abu Bakr. When he went from Jerusalem to the heavens, he was accompanied by Gabriel (*Jibreel* in Arabic), the greatest angel of Allah.

Our greatest journey is to our final destination - Paradise - and it is important that we take the best possible companions to accompany us in this journey. When we are faced by unrelenting temptations, our close friends are there to remind us of our purpose in this life and help us make better choices.

Many teens hang out with their friends more than with their close family members. Many go to school to be with their friends. We get together with friends for many reasons, like watching sports, playing games, or studying for an exam. Why not get together with friends to memorize the Quran or learn the basics of Islam, or study the life of the Prophet? It won't make you a scholar, but it will instill love for learning Islam. Having good Muslim friends will provide support and help we all need in school, college, and beyond.

The most important questions to ask yourself is, 'Do my friends, the people I hang out with, make me a better Muslim?'; 'Do they help me obey or disobey Allah?' Allah said in the Quran,

“Whoever obeys God and the Messenger will be among those He has blessed: the messengers, the truthful, those who bear witness to the truth, and the righteous - what excellent companions these are!”(Quran 4:69)

Our dear Prophet has reminded us,

“A person is with whom he loves.”[\[1\]](#)

Those we love in this life will surround us in the Hereafter. A bad friend who pulls you down, takes you away from your purpose of creation, and pulls you towards what displeases Allah can be recognized by this verse of the Quran,

“And woe to me, if only I did not take him as a friend.”(Quran 25:28)

If a friend's company was beneficial for us, then we will join them in Paradise; if they were detrimental to our faith, then may Allah protect us. The Day of Judgment is scary. All our securities, including friends and family, will leave us on that Day and we will be left

with only our deeds to account for.

It boils down to, 'Are my friends preparing me for the Hereafter?' It is up to me to surround myself with good company otherwise *Shaytan* will pick me off. If we agree, follow and are pleased with bad friends, then we will likely inherit their habits, behaviors and even religious beliefs.

Everyone wants to belong to something or someone. When we constantly seek company with a certain type of people, we become more like them and act like them. It is natural. Gang members feel a sense of identity and pride as members of their crew. Many lose their lives or end up in prison before they realize it is too late. Most smokers start smoking because either their friends smoke or they encourage them to. It is almost always friends who influence such decisions.

Allah, the All-Wise also says: "Friends on that Day will be enemies one to another, except the pious." (Quran 43:67)

Friendship based on common core of faith will benefit and extend after this life. That is true friendship.

Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

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