

THE MINISTRY OF FRIENDSHIP

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:11)

1. The Discipline of Presence

- a. Schedule regular times to connect with your friend
- b. Discover ways to be present with each other in your absence

2. The Discipline of Authenticity

- a. Share your hopes, dreams, fears, vulnerabilities, and uncertainties with each other
- b. Know your own strategies of disconnection that move you away from vulnerability

3. The Discipline of Appreciation

- a. Seek a 5:1 ratio between positive comments and negative comments
- b. Strive for active-constructive responses to your friend

	Active	Passive
Constructive	Reacts with enthusiasm Asks lots of questions Shows genuine concern for friend More happy and excited than friend	Silently supportive of friend Feels happy, but doesn't tell
Destructive	Finds a problem Points out the down side Reminds friend that nothing is all good	Seems to not care Seems uninterested Doesn't pay much attention

4. The Discipline of Patience

- “The whole meaning of the Christian community lies in offering each other a space in which we wait for what we have already seen. Christian community is the place where we keep the flame alive among us and take it seriously, so that it can grow and become stronger in us. In this way we can live with courage, trusting that there is a spiritual power in us that allows us to live in this world without being seduced constantly by despair. That is how we dare to say that God is a God of love even when we see death and destruction and agony all around us. We say it together. We affirm it in each other. Waiting together, nurturing what has already begun, expecting its fulfillment—that is the meaning of Christian marriage, friendship, community, and the Christian life.” (Henri Nouwen, *The Path of Waiting*)