

WELCOME TO

**Wisdom Lab:**  
Friendship on  
the Frontline



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**Make a  
difference  
wherever  
you are**

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The London Institute for  
Contemporary Christianity



▶ **‘We’re not evangelists...’**

‘I’ve made more friends in hell than I’ve made in Jesus’ land’

– *David Le’aupepe,  
Gang of Youths*

Becoming **wise peacemakers** who  
journey toward life, wherever we are...

‘Blessed are the **PEACEMAKERS**,  
for they will be called children of  
God.’ – Matthew 5:9

‘I am sending you out like sheep  
among wolves. Therefore, be as  
**wise** as snakes, and as innocent as  
**doves**.’ – Matthew 10:16





# Triple Listening



► For more on triple listening, see 'Wise Peacemakers' [here](#)

# Being a wise peacemaker

**Listen:** What's going on and why?

**Imagine:** What should be going on?

**Create:** How will we respond?

**Communicate:** How to share the good news?



► For a 2-page process for theological reflection, see [here](#); group version [here](#)





# Our Speakers

LISTEN

IMAGINE

CREATE

COMMUNICATE



Sheridan Voysey

Author and Presenter  
Friendship Lab



Dr Chloe Lynch

Lecturer in Practical Theology,  
London School of Theology



Corin Pilling

UK Director, Sanctuary Mental  
Health Ministries



Phil Knox

Evangelism and Missiology Senior  
Specialist, Evangelical Alliance

# The Plan

LISTEN: Sheridan Voysey

IMAGINE: Chloe Lynch

*Break Out Dialogue*

CREATE: Corin Pilling

COMMUNICATE: Phil Knox

*Break Out Dialogue*

PANEL + Q&A



# LISTEN | How many *close friends* do you have on your frontlines?

## DUNBAR'S NUMBER : 150

TYPICAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WE CAN KEEP TRACK OF AND CONSIDER PART OF OUR ONGOING SOCIAL NETWORK

150  
TRIBE

50  
CLAN

15  
SUPER  
FAMILY

5  
CLOSE  
FRIENDS

← WEAKER TIES → MORE INVESTMENT IN RELATIONSHIP →

DANG! NOW,  
WHAT WAS THEIR  
NAME AGAIN?



# LISTEN | How many *close friends* do you have on your frontlines?





**↓ LISTEN** | *Friendship on the Frontline*

with Sheridan Voysey



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# THE PROBLEM

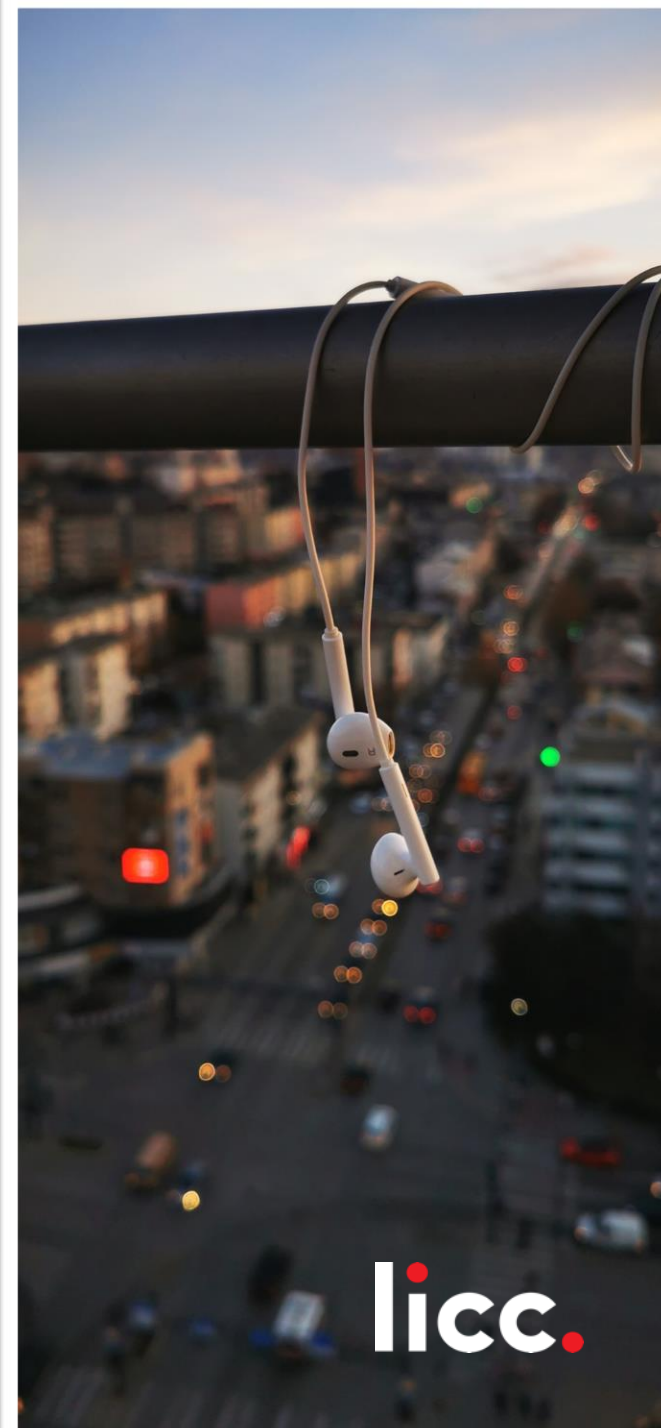
- 20% have no close friends
- 12% have only 1 close friend
- 51% find making new friends hard





# THE BARRIERS

- Busyness
- Mobility
- Workplace changes
- Neglect






# THE FOUNDATIONS

- Freedom
- Equality
- Mutual Relationship





A person is sitting at a wooden table in a dimly lit room. They are wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and have their arms crossed on the table. The room has a window with white blinds on the left and a wall with a grid pattern on the right. There are wooden chairs around the table. The overall mood is contemplative and quiet.

A friend is someone I can talk to, depend on,  
grow with, and enjoy.







# ↓ IMAGINE | *Friendship on the Frontline*

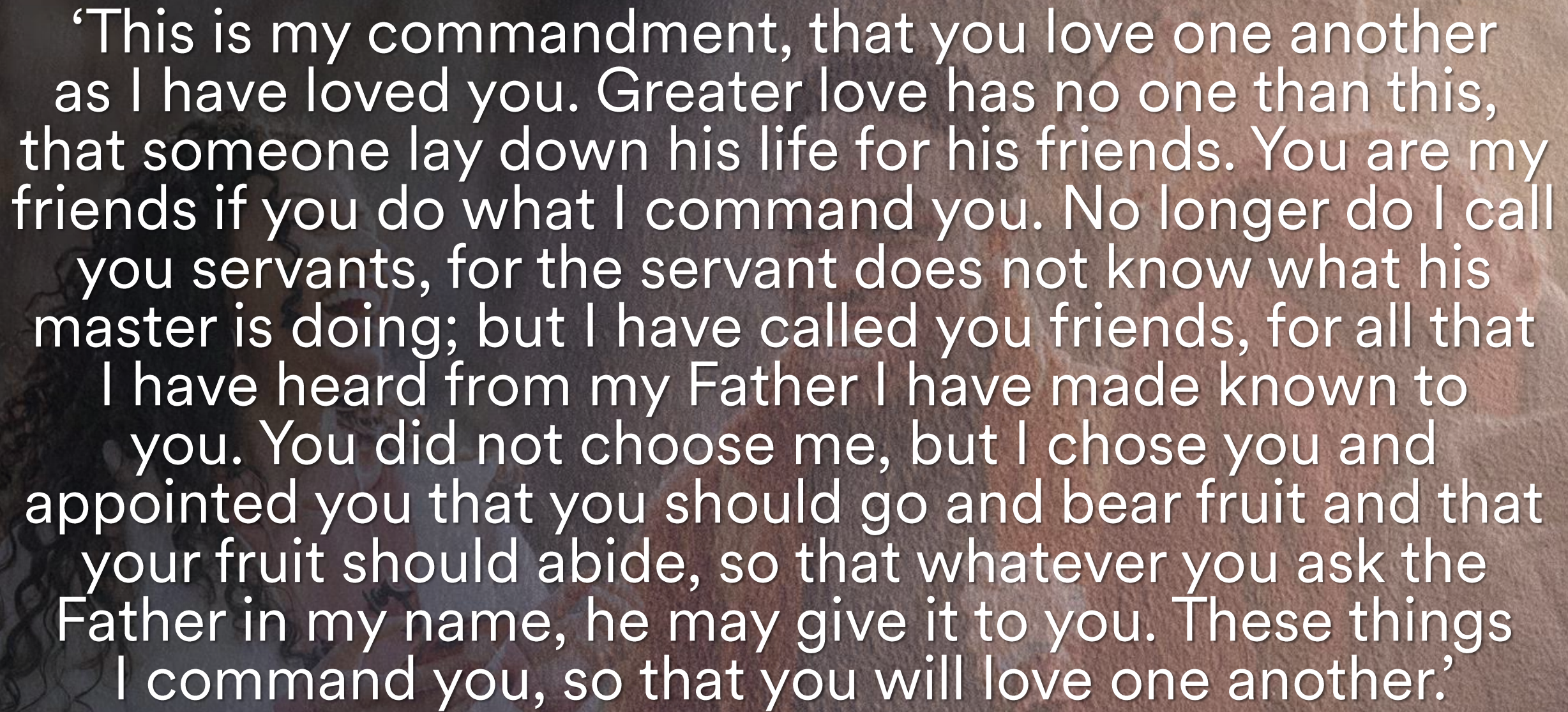
with Chloe Lynch



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A woman with curly hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a white top and a red tie. She is holding an open book and looking down at it. The background is a textured, brownish surface.

‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.’

– Jesus (John 15:12–17)

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# FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

- Invited into intimacy with God
- Different from God, yet sharing life together
- Love that seeks the friend's good



# FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS MEANS FRIENDSHIP WITH PEOPLE

- Inviting others into intimacy
- Different and yet sharing life together
- Love that seeks the friend's good
- Friendship that makes Jesus present to our friends



# Discussion Groups

**LISTEN** | what does this issue look like on your frontline? How have these *four forces* made friendship harder? Do you have friends you can talk to, depend on, grow with, & enjoy?

**Busyness**  
**Mobility**  
**Work**  
**Neglect**

**IMAGINE** | what should be going on? And how does friendship with those not like us look different when seen through the Bible's epic story, centred on Jesus?



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# ↓CREATE | *Friendship on the Frontline*

with Corin Pilling



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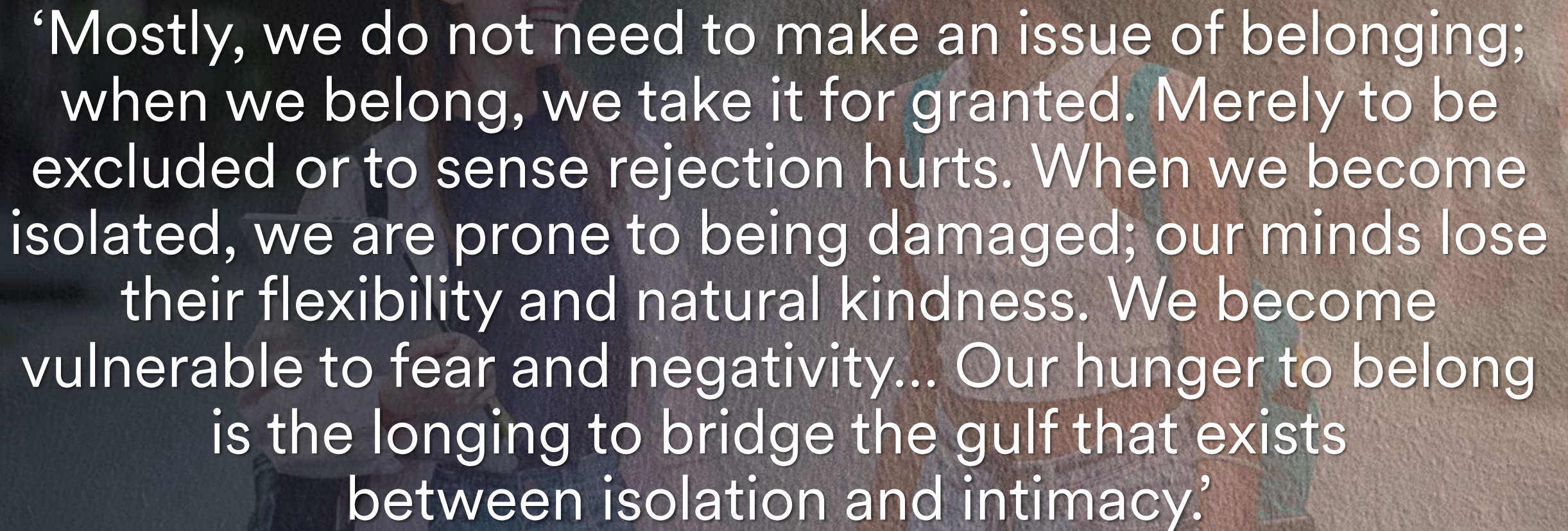


# A 'BLESSED' STORY (*'Makarios' in Matthew*)

- '*Flourishing* are the poor in Spirit as theirs is the kingdom of heaven'
- Actively seeking friendship, to overcome forces which oppose
- ... our calling, with God's help, is being made whole together





A woman with short dark hair and a young girl with long dark hair are smiling at each other. The woman is wearing a light-colored top and a colorful quilted blanket draped over her shoulders. The girl is wearing a dark top and blue jeans. They are standing in front of a textured, light-colored wall.

‘Mostly, we do not need to make an issue of belonging; when we belong, we take it for granted. Merely to be excluded or to sense rejection hurts. When we become isolated, we are prone to being damaged; our minds lose their flexibility and natural kindness. We become vulnerable to fear and negativity... Our hunger to belong is the longing to bridge the gulf that exists between isolation and intimacy.’

– John O’Donohue, *Eternal Echoes*



# LAMENT to name the loneliness

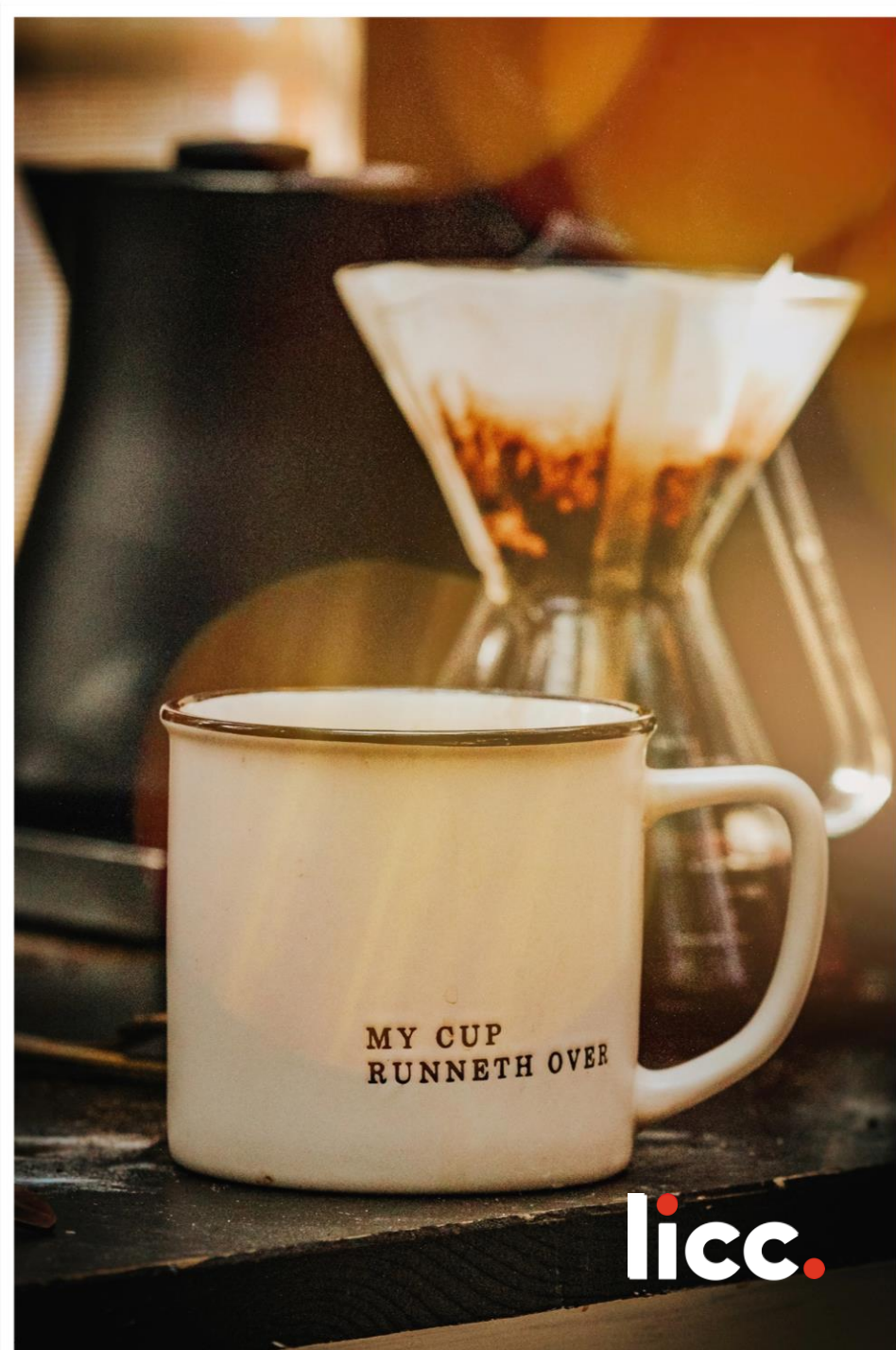
- Drop the stigma; loneliness is human
- Psalms of lament help us embrace God's healing action in our lives
- Engage others in honest conversation





# GRATITUDE to embrace the new

- Count your friendship blessings
- Practice gratitude together
- Expand your common ground





# PLAY for a fresh perspective together

- Post-Covid, we need spontaneity and moments of sheer fun
- What was immersive play as a kid?
- Create together, getting out of your head and into your body, even at work









# ↓ COMMUNICATE | *Friendship on the Frontline*

with Phil Knox

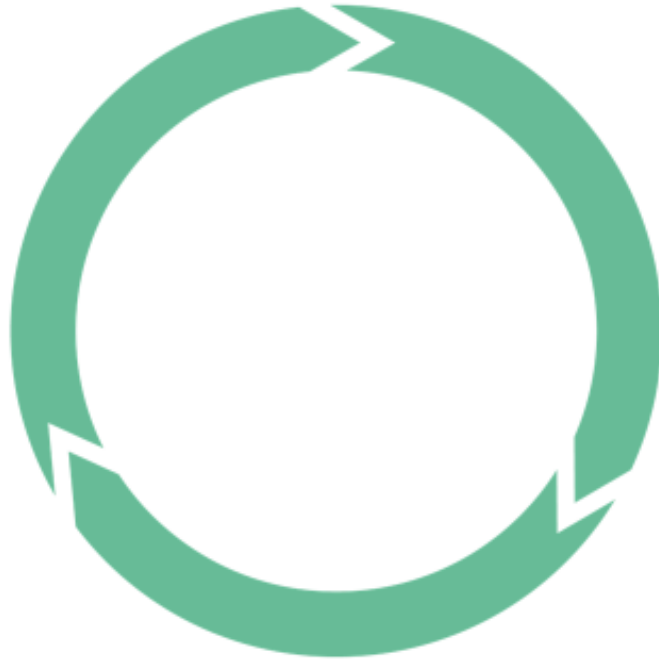


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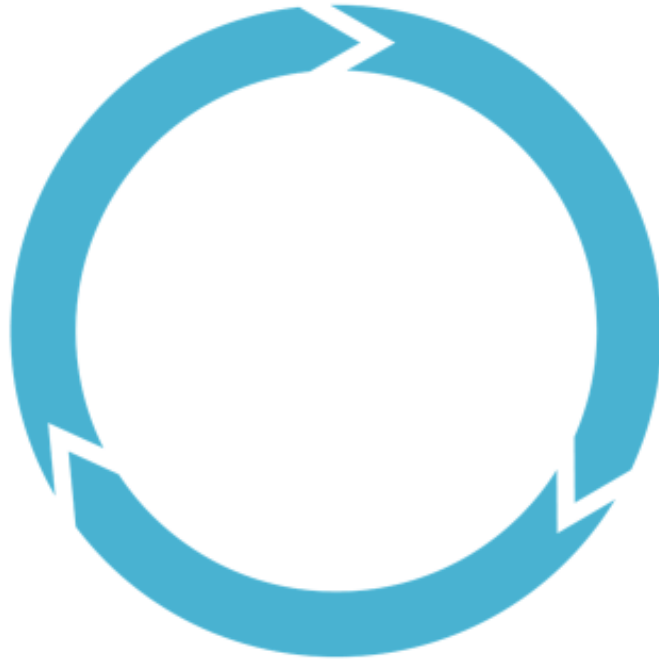


# GOD'S STORY



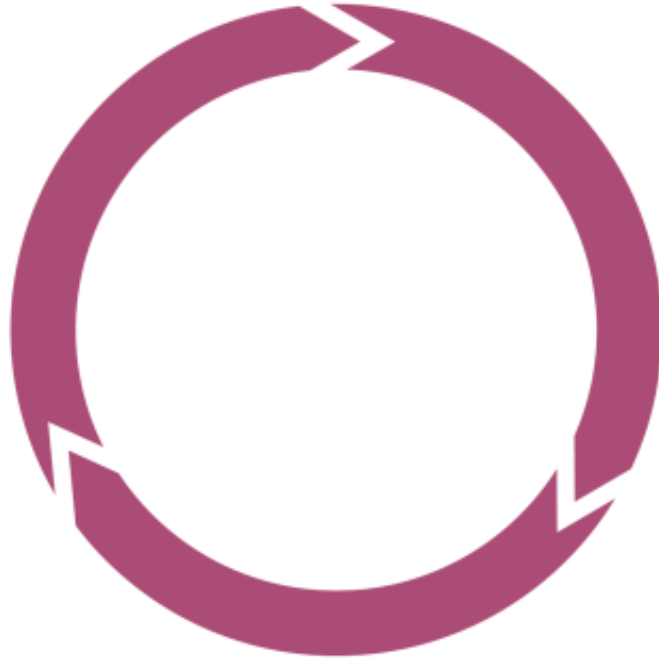


# OUR STORY



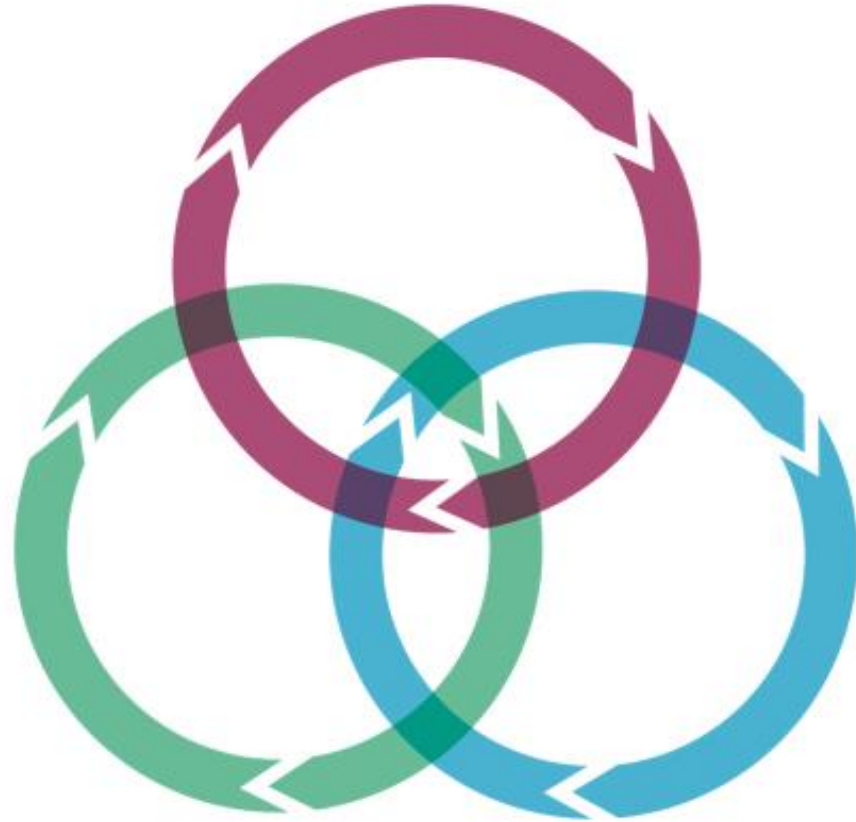


# MY FRIEND'S STORY





# FRIENDSHIP: A SHARED STORY...





# Discussion Groups

**CREATE** | how would Jesus have you respond on your frontline? What form might these *three practices* take as acquaintances become friends?

**Lament  
Gratitude  
Play**

**COMMUNICATE** | why is the gospel truly good news for your not-yet-Christian friends? Where does God's story intersect with your story and their story?



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Share your questions & contributions...



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WELCOME BACK!

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the Frontline



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Share a question or comment for the panel, or a particular speaker

10 questions  
7 upvotes





# Extra Resources



Menti results



***Discussion Guide & Slides***



Frontline Friendship Articles



‘Wise Peacemaker’ process (full version) + blogs




All WISDOM LABS (sex, tech, justice, common good, shaping culture, etc.)





# Listen & Respond

 What *\*one\** thing will you *\*do\** in response to this evening, as a Christlike friend in our lonely age?





A photograph of two women sitting at a small table outdoors. The woman on the left has red curly hair and is wearing a bright green puffer jacket. She is holding a smartphone and looking at it. The woman on the right has dark curly hair in a bun and is wearing a blue denim jacket and pink pants. She is looking towards the first woman. On the table is a coffee cup. In the background, there is a stone wall and another person in an orange jacket talking on a phone.

# Wisdom Lab: Friendship on the Frontline



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