We are told that prisoners of war can survive 28 to 40 days without food. Research also indicates that obese persons can live three weeks to 25 weeks without food depending upon health and amount of fat. Can we live without water? Charles W. Bryant in an article on living without water writes “Living without water is very different from living without food. In hot conditions with no water, dehydration can set in within an hour. A baby locked in a hot car or someone who is physically over exerted in the heat without replacing fluids can actually die in a period of several hours.” It is clear to then that we cannot live long without food of water. Can we live without friendship relationships?

WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT FRIENDS
How long can we live without friendship relationships? Numerous research studies have been done regarding longevity and friendship. “A 10-year study of people over the age of 70 in Australia suggests friendship is most important. The researchers found that friends are more important than family in conferring longevity and that people with an extensive network of good friends outlive those with the fewest friends by 22 percent.”

The truth is that medicine, healthy food and nutritional supplements may keep us well but living without long-lasting friendship relationships can still negatively impact our lives. One author writes “We overlook a powerful weapon that could help us fight illness and depression, speed recovery, slow aging and prolong life: our friends.” Dr. Sheldon Cohen at Carnegie-Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh studied how social ties help protect the human body against infectious diseases. His research revealed that persons who had only one to three types of relationships (for example: marriage, work place, social clubs, parents, siblings, etc) had four times the risk of developing a cold than those reporting six or more types of relationships. The bottom line is that those who provide social support to a diversity of people regardless of their background are increasing their resistance to developing a cold, even when they were infected with the rhinovirus. This research supports my view that friendship relationship is as important as food.

BIBLICAL MANDATE
The Bible acknowledges that a friend can be closer than a blood relative and that relatives are not by default friends. Proverbs 18:24 (KJV) “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Ray S. Anderson in his article Living the Spiritually Balanced Life states, “Friendship maybe the only form of human social relationship that is sustained primarily by kindness. . . . One continues to function as a parent, spouse, worker, and neighbor, even though kindness may be lacking. . . . With friendship, it is entirely different. Kindness is the glue that binds friends together. If I should humiliate a friend, be insensitive to the feelings of a friend, cause unnecessary harm or hurt to a friend, or in any way treat a friend as an object that I use for my own pleasure and gratification, the friendship dissolves.”

Romans 12:10 states “Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another . . .” This text is not limited to family relationships but to everyone the Christian comes in contact with. The Bible gives clear instructions how the Christian
behavior should be toward to strangers and persons they come in contact with every day. Here are a few texts:

- Judge not one another. (James 4:12)
- Kindly show affection to one another. (Rom. 12:10)
- Live in peace with one another. (1 Thess. 5:13)
- Minister spiritual gifts to one another. (1 Peter 4:10)
- Never become conceited, provoking one another. (Gal. 5:26)
- Owe no one anything except to love one another. (Rom. 13:8)
- Pray for one another. (James 5:16)
- Regard one another as more important than ourselves. (Phil. 2:3)
- Submit to one another. (1 Peter 5:5)
- Teach one another. (Col. 3:16)
- Use hospitality to one another without grudging. (1 Peter 4:9)
- Wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)
- Accept one another. (Rom. 14:1)
- Bear one another's burdens. (Gal. 6:2)
- Comfort one another. (1 Thess. 4:18)
- Do not speak evil of one another. (James 4:11)
- Encourage one another. (Heb. 3:13)
- Forgive one another. (Eph. 4:32)
- Greet one another with a holy kiss. (1 Cor. 16:20)
- Have compassion for one another. (Eph. 4:32)

GOOD MORNING
It is my view that we need to demonstrate a spirit of friendliness in our country. If more people can show acts of kindness and gestures of courtesy and respect, we can reduce the crime rate. We need to hear more of “good morning sir,” or “thank you,” or “how can I help you,” or “how are you doing today?” We need to be more sensitive to people’s needs and offer assistance when needed. We need to reach out to own neighbors and establish relationships that can bring peace and not fear. Let us remember the friendship is truly the best medicine.

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