

## TRUE FRIENDS

**JESUS HEALS A PARALYTIC** *When Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 'Some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" Mark 2:1-12*

1. If CNN reported on this incident, what would be their lead line?

- A faith healer makes a paralytic walk.       Four friends raise the roof to help a friend.  
 A preacher upsets religious leaders.       Police are looking for vandals in a house breakin.

2. If you were one of the paralytic's four friends and saw the crowd where Jesus was, what would you do?

- suggest we come back later       politely wait in line       make a hole in the roof  
 go along with the hole in the roof, but make it clear it wasn't my idea

3. How would you feel if you were the paralytic when your friends decided to help you "drop in on Jesus"?     reluctant-"You will embarrass me."       scared-"You're going to drop me!"

- grateful-"Thanks for your concern."       apprehensive-"They are going to throw us out"  
 mixed feelings-"I don't think this is going to work, but I will trust you guys."

4. What impresses you most about the four friends?       their faith       their boldness  
 their ingenuity and creativity       their determination       their concern for their friend

5. What is the closest you have come to having a supportive community who cared for you when you were hurting?

6. It is 12 o'clock at night. You are in trouble. You need some friends to come over and be with you. Four friends that would:      . listen as you talk about the crisis you are going through ...  
. be with you as late as necessary ...    . keep your problem confidential...    . pray for you...  
. and support you through this crisis. WHAT FRIENDS WOULD YOU CALL? Give four first names.

7. What event in your life brought you closest to God?

- when some friends really supported me       when Jesus healed me when I was hurting  
 when someone I was close to got really sick or died  
 when I attended a camp or special worship experience     when I committed my life to Christ  
 when I felt God's forgiveness       No event has brought me that feeling.       other:

8. How do you need to change to receive more support from friends?  be more open

- be a better listener       stop trying to be so self-sufficient     be more supportive myself  
 find some new or different friends       be more patient       other:

9. Who were the friends in your life who cared enough to bring you to Jesus?

10. If you had friends who would take you to Jesus for healing today, what kind of healing would you ask for?     physical       spiritual       emotional       relational

11. Pray about what was just shared. Then close your meeting by affirming one another. Have each person listen silently while others share what qualities that person has that make him or her a good friend