

**A Reading from the Book of Sirach:**

A kind mouth multiplies friends and appeases enemies,  
and gracious lips prompt friendly greetings.

Let your acquaintances be many, but one in a thousand your confidant.

When you gain a friend, first test him, and be not too ready to trust him.

For one sort is a friend when it suits him,  
but he will not be with you in time of distress.

Another is a friend who becomes an enemy,  
and tells of the quarrel to your shame.

Another is a friend, a boon companion,  
who will not be with you when sorrow comes.

When things go well, he is your other self,  
and lords it over your servants;

But if you are brought low, he turns against you  
and avoids meeting you.

Keep away from your enemies;  
be on your guard with your friends.

A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter;  
he who finds one finds a treasure.

A faithful friend is beyond price,  
no sum can balance his worth.

A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy,  
such as he who fears God finds;

For he who fears God behaves accordingly,  
and his friend will be like himself.

**The Word of the Lord**