

Proverbs 27:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

Analysis

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off—The Hebrew re'akha v-re'a avikha al-ta'azov (רְאֵךְ וְרֵעֵךְ אֶבֶיךְ אֶל-תָּאֹזֵב, 'your friend and your father's friend do not forsake') emphasizes multi-generational covenant loyalty. True friendship transcends convenience—it's inherited, cultivated, and maintained through seasons. The contrast between shaken qarov (קָרוֹב, 'near neighbor') and ach rachok (אָחֵךְ רָחוֹק, 'far brother') isn't familial denigration but practical wisdom: proximity enables help in crisis.

Maintain long-term friendships and proximity to community. In calamity (eid, אֵיד, 'disaster'), theoretical relationships offer little comfort—you need people who can physically arrive. This wisdom informed early church practices of localized community with tangible mutual aid (Acts 2:44-45). Digital 'friendship' that lacks embodied presence offers limited help in real crisis.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern society operated on patron-client relationships and family alliances spanning generations. A 'father's friend' represented inherited covenant relationships that provided social capital, wisdom, and mutual obligation. The extended family (brother's house) was primary safety net, but the proverb recognizes that geographic distance can limit practical help.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What long-term friendships (including those inherited from parents) have you neglected that should be renewed?
2. How does our mobile society's frequent relocation affect our ability to have 'near neighbors' for crisis?
3. In what ways should local church community function as both inherited friendship and proximate help?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתְפַּעַז בְּאֶל אָבִיךָ וְעַה
Thine own friend Thine own friend and thy father's H408 forsake H1004 house
H7453 H7453 H1 H5800 H1004

כִּי וּמְאֹד בָּאָל אִיד בְּנֵי וּמְאֹד כִּי
into thy brother's H408 not neither go H935 in the day H3117 of thy calamity H343 for better
H251 H251 H251 H3117 H343 H2896

כְּחִזְקָה מֵאָדָם שָׁכֵן
is a neighbour that is near into thy brother's far off
H7934 H7138 H251 H7350

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 18:24 (Parallel theme): A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 17:17 (Parallel theme): A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 19:7 (Parallel theme): All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.

2 Samuel 19:24 (Parallel theme): And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

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