

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* (רֵעֶךָ וְרֵעֲךָ אֲבִיכָה אַל-תֵּאַזֹּב, '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 *garov* (שָׁכֵן קָרוֹב, 'near neighbor') and *ach rachok* (אָח 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*, אִיד, '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

וְרֵעֶה	וְרֵעֶה	אָבִי יְרֵךְ	אֶל	וְיָתֵץ בְּ	וּבֵית
Thine own friend	Thine own friend	and thy father's	H408	forsake	house
H7453	H7453	H1		H5800	H1004
יְמֵךְ ח	אֶל	לֹא בֹא	בִּי יוֹם	אִידֶךָ	טוֹב
into thy brother's	H408	not neither go	in the day	of thy calamity	for better
H251		H935	H3117	H343	H2896
שָׁכֵן	קָרִיב	יְמֵךְ ח	בְּחֹלֶק:		
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.