

Some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."

So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins — "I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."⁶

1. Touch I touch the Heart of Friendship.

I hold two cups, one full of water, one empty. Each cup is a friend. I pour water, life, from one cup into the other. When I pour it back again, the cups become a symbol of friendship. Each gives to the other. I repeat this as desired.

I remember a small story when someone was a friend to me in desperate times. I share it with family at home, or them and friends by phone or online, listening to their stories, feeling touched by the Spirit of Friendship... I begin to understand how friendship can sustain life in the darkest places, on the most frightening journeys.

2. Desire I desire to Carry a Friend.

I read the prayer text from ancient spiritual traditions.

I name all the people I want to carry to healing and help...

I ask the Spirit of Friendship to help me be a carry a friend in critical need. When life threatening illness strips ordinary life away, friendship is life saving in many ways. It may be at distance, by phone, giving what ever is needed.

3. Befriend I breathe in the Spirit of Friendship.

I imagine and feel the Spirit of Friendship unfurling in me, releasing the love and practical help that reaches out in friendship. I breathe it in deep, wait, then breathe it out those who need a friend to carry them, one way or another, to urgent healing.

I repeat as desired – breathing, befriending, helping quickly ...

I conclude in thanks, considering two things. First, if possible, can I get in touch with the one who befriended me so well, to reconnect. Second, to decide who I might pass this exercise on to, and how. Who urgently needs to carry a friend now?

PRAYER TIME: Go gently, using the generous time you have put aside for this prayer.
The three dots ... indicate the places to pause.
If you are specially moved at any of the steps, remain there for the rest of the prayer.

⁶ Lk 5:18-20,24-26