

## Asking for a Friend

**“I really want to go to church... but I don’t have the nice clothes that everyone else does.”**

**Scripture Focus:** *“Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”* – 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

*“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”* – Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

Let’s just say what a lot of people feel but are too afraid to admit: **church can feel intimidating.** Especially when you think everyone else has it all together—the right words, the right family, the right outfits.

Maybe you’ve stood in front of your closet on a Sunday morning and thought, *“I can’t go in there looking like this.”*

No pressed shirt. No polished shoes. No “Sunday best.”

But what if I told you that **God isn’t looking for your present—He’s looking for your presence?**

Let that sink in.

God doesn’t care about your dress code. He cares about your **heart condition.** He doesn’t see wrinkled jeans or scuffed-up sneakers—He sees a soul who is seeking Him. And *that’s* what moves His heart.

There is a **big difference between a present and presence.** A *present* is something you bring to impress, to earn approval, to gain favor. But your *presence*—just showing up—is what God desires most. Not because He needs you to be perfect, but because He wants to be **with you.**

You don’t need a special outfit to be welcomed in God’s house. Jesus wore simple robes, walked dusty roads, and surrounded Himself with fishermen, outcasts, and broken people who came just as they were. He still does.

So if all you’ve got is a hoodie and a heavy heart? Bring it. If all you’ve got is jeans and a bunch of questions? Bring those too.

**Your presence is enough. Because He is already present, waiting for you.**

**Prayer:**

God, thank You for not asking me to be polished or perfect before I come to You. Thank You for loving me as I am. Help me stop focusing on how I look on the outside and start focusing on being present in Your house and in Your presence. Thank You for meeting me right where I am.

**In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

**Reflection Questions:**

- Have you ever let fear of appearance or judgment keep you from going to church?
- What does it mean to *be present* in God's presence—not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally?
- How can we help create churches where people feel free to come just as they are?