

EXERCISE 1

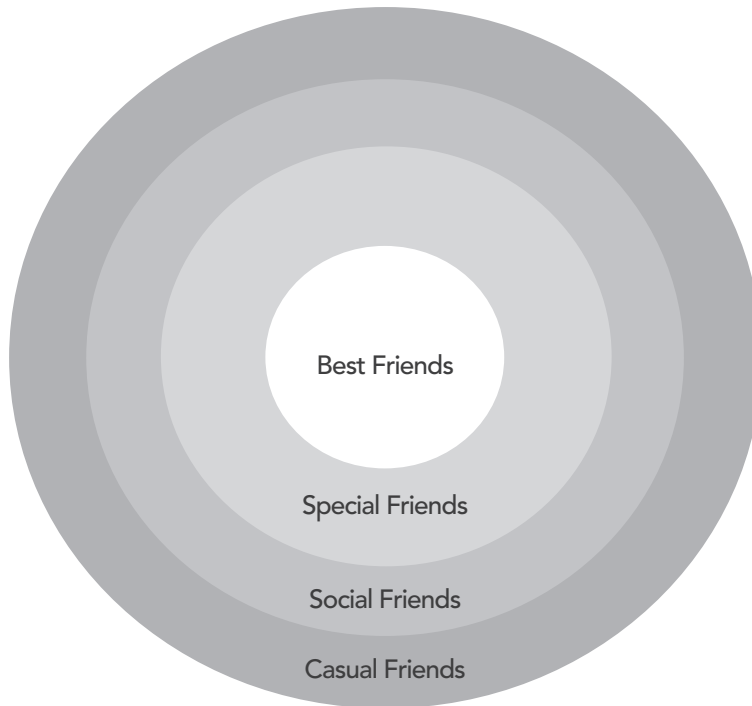
Jesus' Friendship Circles

Jesus gathered friends and others around him with wisdom and insight. In chapter two, I shared my own snapshot depicting Jesus' Friendship Circles. I chose to picture the key relationships Jesus had at the time of his ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Now it's your turn.

Read John 15:1-17. Then fill in the Friendship Circles below, showing how close the people listed below were to Jesus' heart as he prepared to face the cross.

(Note: If you prefer, you can choose another moment in Jesus' life, and depict his friendships at that time.)

- His mother, Mary
- Peter, James, and John
- Judas
- The other 8 apostles
- Mary, her sister, Martha, and their brother, Lazarus
- The Jerusalem crowds
- Those unnamed disciples who later joined the apostles in the upper room
- Nicodemus
- The Pharisees and Sadducees
- John the Baptist
- Jesus' father, Joseph, and siblings



Key to Placing People in the Friendship Circles

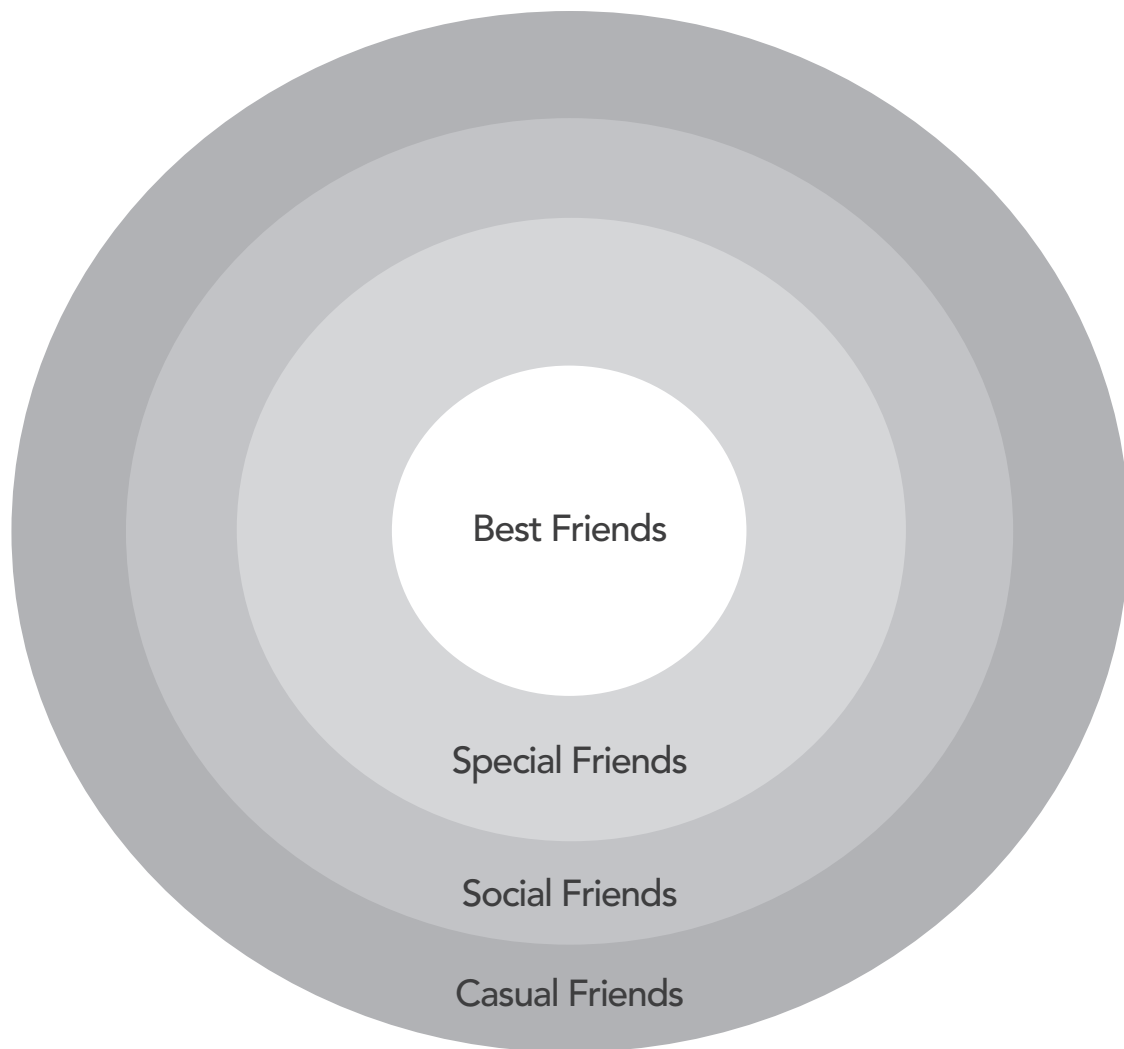
1. Best Friends (center circle or bull's-eye): the 2 or 3 dearest loved ones.
 2. Special Friends: the 3–5 closest friends outside the center circle.
 3. Social Friends: the 7–12 people one spends a great deal of time with.
 4. Casual Friends: the 50–200 people one knows by name and might socialize or work with (acquaintances).
- Outside the Circles: Non-friends and enemies.

Jesus' Circle of Friends on _____

EXERCISE 2

My Current Friendship Circles

Where do others fit into your current web of relationships? Fill in the Friendship Circles below, showing how close individuals are to you at the present time. The closer a person is to your heart, the more potential influence he or she has over your emotions, will, thoughts, and actions. In circle four, groups can be listed, but try to list as many significant individuals as possible.

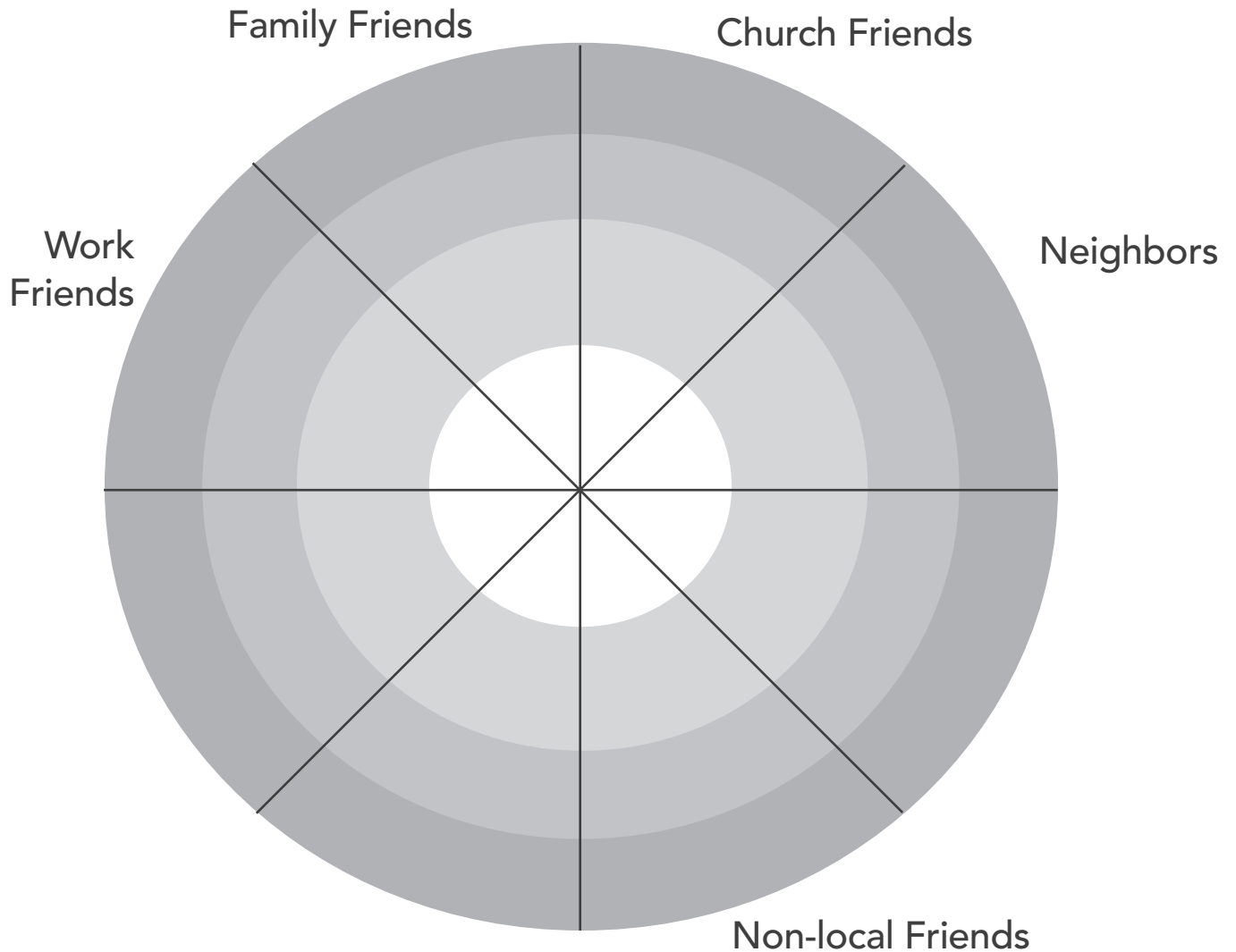


My Circle of Friends as of _____ (today's date)

EXERCISE 3

**My Current Friendship
Circles—By Groupings**

Individuals in our web of relationships share connections with others. Review your answers to exercise 2 and fill in the Friendship Circles below, keeping individuals in the appropriate circles but also placing them in the “slices” that best describe their relationships with you—family friends, church friends, work friends, neighbors, non-local friends, and others (you also can create custom categories).



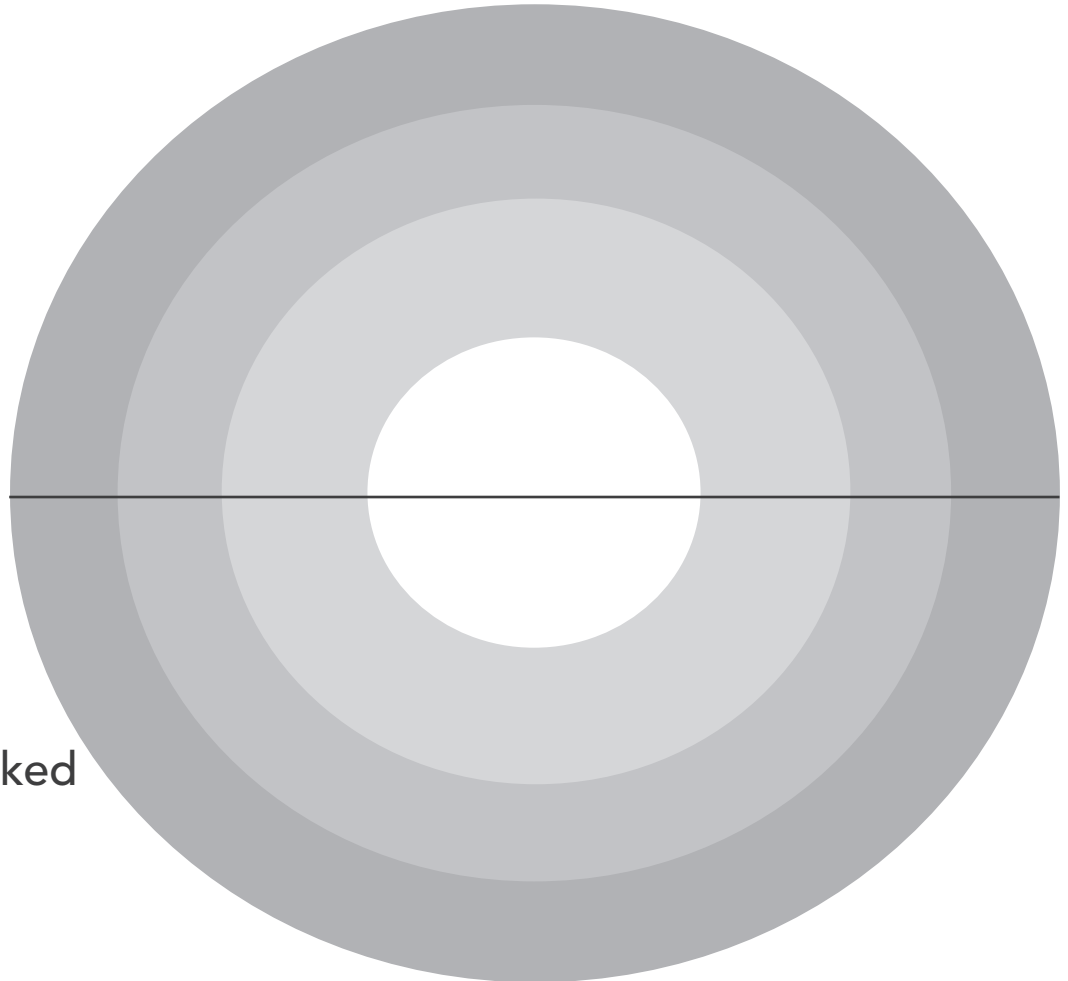
My Circle of Friends as of _____ (today's date)

EXERCISE 4

**My Current Friendship
Circles and Social
Networking Sites**

Social networking sites are dramatically expanding the number of people with whom we keep in touch. Review your answers to exercise 2 and fill in the Friendship Circles below. If a friend is networked to you (through Facebook or other sites) place them in the top half of the circle; if not, place them in the bottom half. What do you see?

Networked
Friends



Non-networked
Friends

CIRCLE 1: ___ of my ___ *Best Friends* are networked with me.

CIRCLE 2: ___ of my ___ *Special Friends* are networked with me.

CIRCLE 3: ___ of my ___ *Social Friends* are networked with me.

CIRCLE 4: ___ of my ___ *Casual Friends* are networked with me.

EXERCISE 5

Social Networking Sites and My Online Web of Relationships

Building on the results from exercise 4, this exercise focuses on grouping the people with whom you are networked through various social networking websites. We'll assume you are analyzing your Facebook "Friends," but you can adapt this exercise to other sites you use.

STEP 1: On Facebook, go to your Wall and look for the Friends Box on the left panel. How many total Facebook Friends do you have? _____ people

STEP 2: Click the "Friends" link at the top of your Wall. You will see 50 friends on each web page.

STEP 3: Go through the list of all of your "Friends." (You might want to print out the list so that you can complete this step in writing.) Consider your rela-

tionship with each person in your list. Next to each name, assign one of the codes from the table below to indicate if the person is in one of your friendship circles, or related to you in another way or for another reason.

STEP 4: Count how many people are in each category. (A simple spreadsheet can automate this process for you.) Then write the totals and calculate percentages using the table below.

STEP 5: What does the table reveal about your Facebook "Friends" and your friendship circles? Some reflection questions you might wish to answer are:

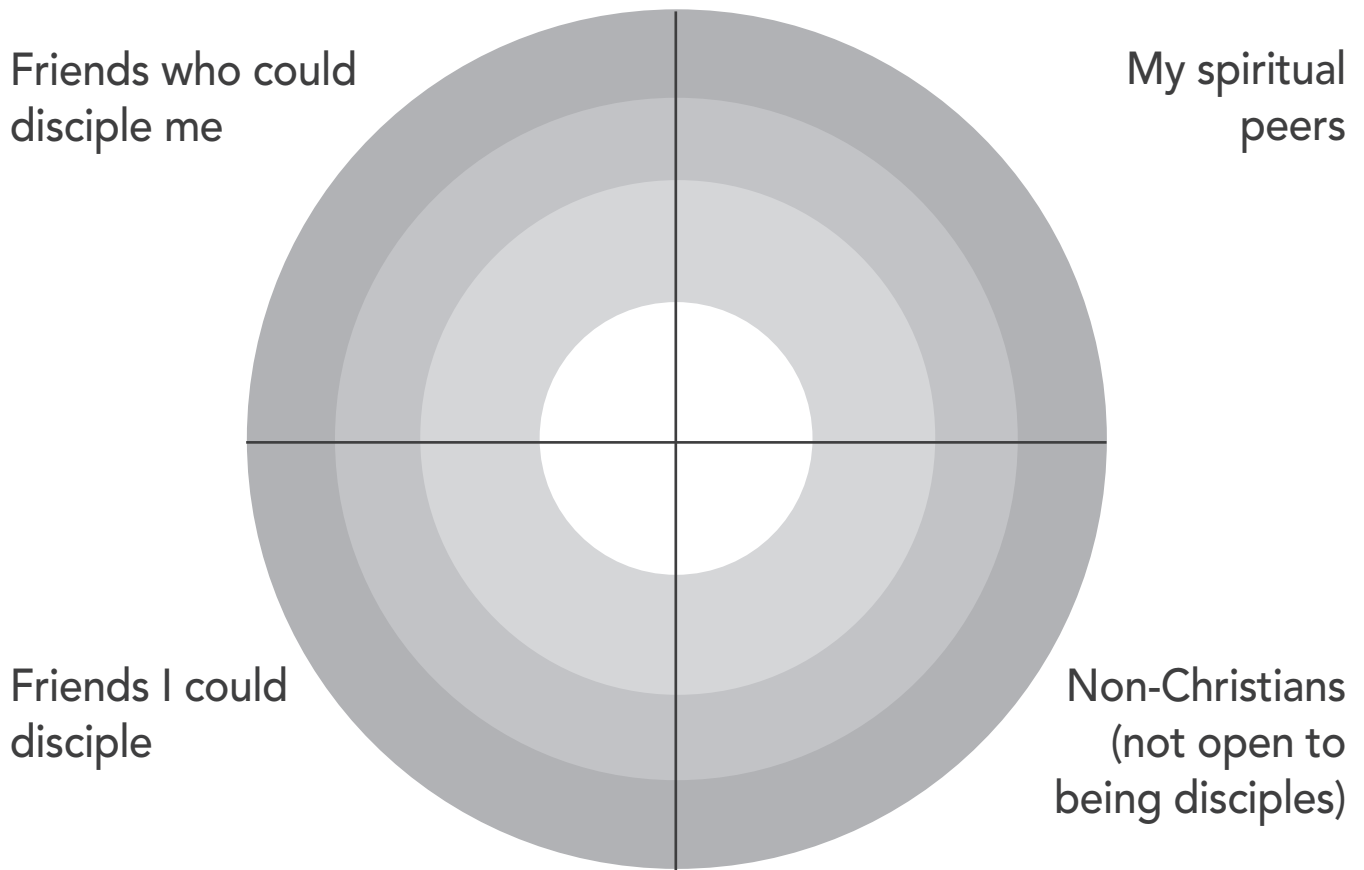
1. How many of your Facebook "Friends" are truly friends (these people are in one of your four friendship circles)?
2. How do you use Facebook to maintain and enhance your relationship with your close friends (those in the three inner circles)?
3. Do you feel that Facebook has enabled you to sustain and deepen your close friendships? Why or why not?

Code	Category	Number	Percent
(1)	Circle 1 Friends (Best Friends)		
(2)	Circle 2 Friends (Special Friends)		
(3)	Circle 3 Friends (Social Friends)		
(4)	Circle 4 Friends (Casual Friends)		
C	Church people who are not in the 4 circles		
F	Family members who are not in the 4 circles		
J	Job related people who are not in the 4 circles		
N	Neighbors/locals who are not in the 4 circles		
P	People from your past who are not in the 4 circles		
X	Ex-friends whom you prefer not to deal with		
?	People you do not know at all (this happens!)		
Totals	Total Number of Facebook "Friends"		100%

EXERCISE 6

My Current Friends and Discipleship Possibilities

Appropriate discipleship relationships depend upon discerning the spiritual maturity of others. How many of your current friends have the spiritual maturity to disciple you effectively? How many would best be described as your peers in the faith? How many could you disciple? Review your answers to exercise 2 and fill in the Friendship Circles below. What do you see?



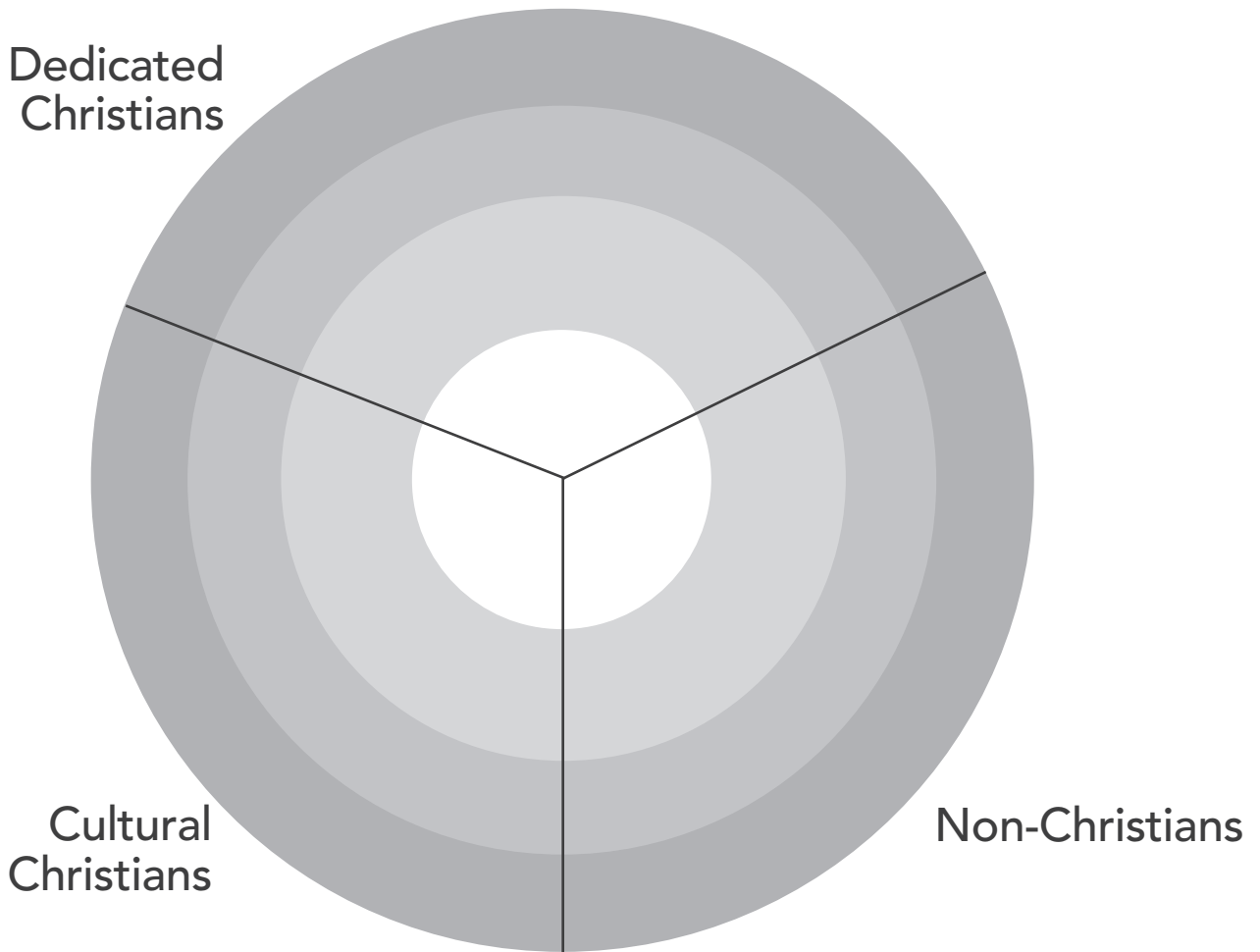
Where do the majority of your friends fall?

What group has the most people in your three inner circles?

EXERCISE 7

**My Current Friends
and Their Faith**

Friendship evangelism depends upon faith diversity in your web of relationships. How many of your current friends are Christians? Review your answers to exercise 2 and fill in the friendship circles below. Distinguish between friends who are dedicated Christians (a personal relationship with Christ), cultural Christians (occasionally go to church but faith isn't a central to their lives), and non-Christians. What have you learned?



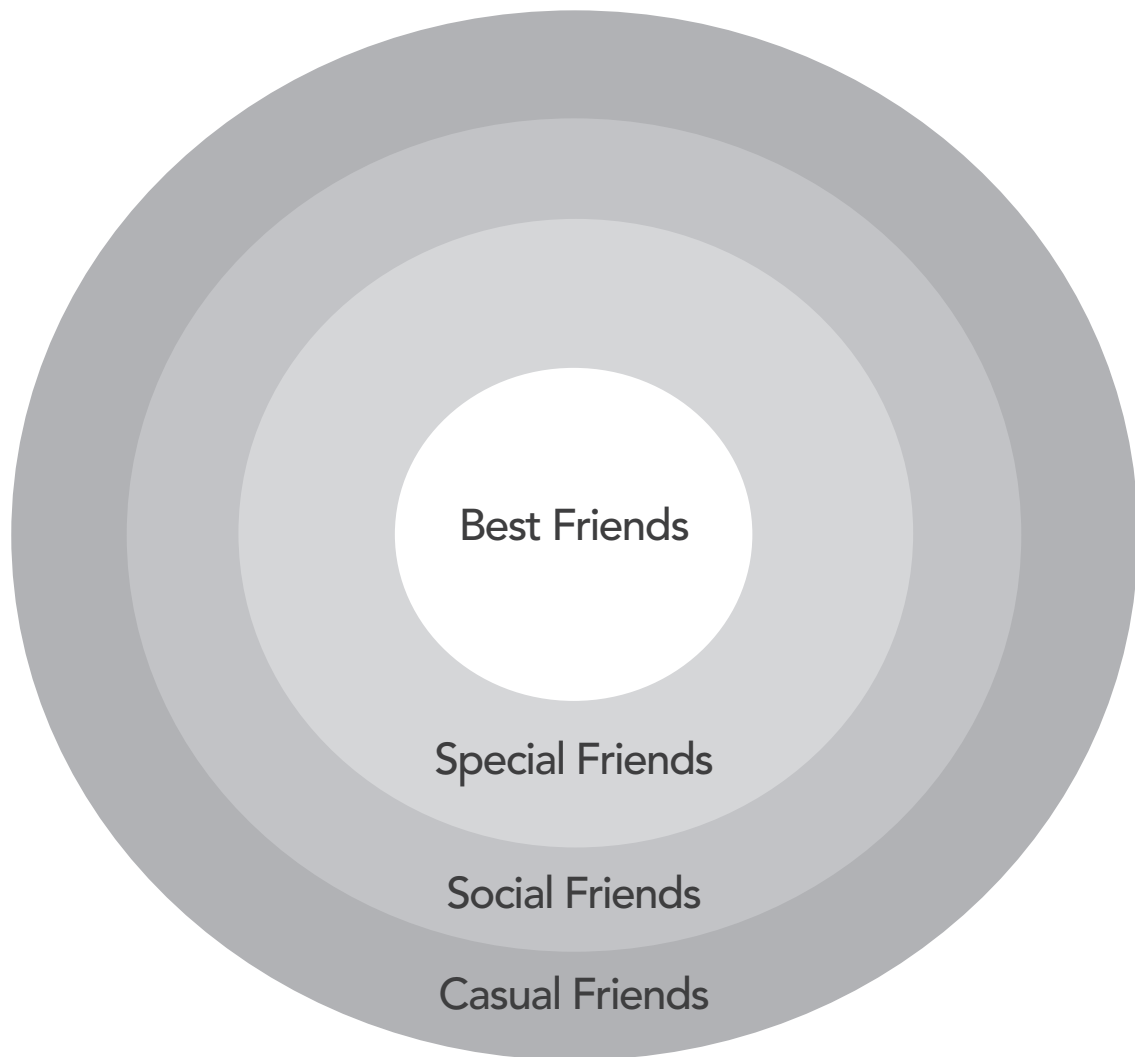
Where do most of your friends fall? _____

What group has the most people in your three inner circles? _____

EXERCISE 8

My Friendship Circles before My Last Major Life Change

Think back to a time right before your last major life change (moving, starting of a new job, getting married or divorced). Who were the individuals in your web of relationships? Fill in the friendship circles below, showing how close individuals were to you at that time. The closer a person is to your heart, the more potential influence over you. In Circle 4, groups can be listed, but list as many significant individuals as possible.



My Circle of Friends as of _____

EXERCISE 9

Friendship Circles Exercise Reflection

Having completed the Friendship Circle exercises, take a few moments to write down any insights you may have gained from the experience and your answers.

- What qualities of character and personality are found among your close friends?

- Are there members of the other gender in your inner three circles? Why or why not?

- How have your close friends influenced your relationship with God, your ministry or job, and your spiritual journeys?

- How have your friendship circles changed since moving to your current locale?

- Where are your spouse and children in your circles? Why?