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#bepresent

## Act 9: Be Present

by Catherine Durant

'Being present for someone' might conjure up images of therapeutic chats and tissue boxes. But really, all it means is intentionally putting yourself in the presence of others, for their benefit. It's giving the best of your time and the best of your attention to make someone feel valued. Maybe today that's someone who you've overlooked, or who doesn't usually get invited out.

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."  
(Galatians 6:2 NKJV)

If you're in need of comfort, there's nothing better than a deep and meaningful chat with a friend – old or new. Give me a safe space and someone I trust and I can monologue my life story for a good while, as I'm sure my friends would vouch...

It doesn't matter whether it's a cosy coffee shop, a soulless service station or an increasingly cold and condensation-filled car; sharing problems with someone who will listen without judgement and pray is something I value so much whenever I'm struggling.

Over the past few years, I've seen more and more advice that encourages cutting negativity out of your life, mostly directed towards getting rid of 'negative people' who 'bring you down'. Of course, that's healthy in cases where someone's hurting you, constantly gossiping or putting you in danger. But this culture of dropping people who drain you goes completely against the Bible's teaching about how we look after each other.

'Bear[ing] one another's burdens' totally flips this idea of self-preservation. It involves a cost.

People who are hurting aren't always capable of giving us their best. I'm so glad that I've had friends who've stuck around at times when I haven't been laughing and smiling, though that isn't always the case. We're all capable of letting each other down, but as a body of believers we know that if one part suffers, we all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26). Helping others through suffering involves understanding where they are and walking with them to carry the weight of it.

It might feel daunting, but alongside our friends, we can bring those burdens to Jesus – who understands everything we go through and carries all our sorrows. We can entrust them to him, knowing that he loves and takes care of our friends far more than we ever could.

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Catherine works in Content (which means mainly writing and editing) for Stewardship. She is happiest when making new friends or catching up with old ones, loves art in all its forms and anything French, especially cheese.

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## Choose how to complete this act...



### **GREEN OPTION:**

Spend some quality time listening to a friend or family member. Why not have breakfast or lunch together today?



### **YELLOW OPTION:**

Strike up a conversation with a colleague or classmate who you haven't ever sought out friendship with. Make sure the first three questions are about them.



**RED  
OPTION:**

Be present with quality listening. If someone has shared their worries with you recently, follow up with them and try not to jump in with advice before it's due. If you're up for it, take some courses ([like this one](#)) to help you get better at listening.

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