

Beginning at Zero

Friendship expectations grace and thoughtful boundaries

Seven day devotional | By Mika Akindoju

Let friendship have room to grow

This plan invites you to consider expectations, trust, grace, and capacity through Scripture. Read each passage in your Bible, reflect privately, pray, and choose one manageable step. There is no need to explain your relationships to the group.

Mika's number-line illustration begins at zero: neither assuming the worst nor assigning someone a role before knowing her. This is a personal picture, not a biblical formula. Reasonable expectations, clear agreements, and appropriate boundaries still have a place.

You can offer kindness, receive care, and enjoy ordinary moments of friendship while allowing trust to develop over time.

Day 1 Begin with goodwill

Read: Romans 12:9–13

Consider

Paul describes sincere love, honor, and hospitality within Christian community. We can begin with an active welcome rather than a story we have already written about someone. Curiosity gives us room to learn. A simple conversation can be worthwhile without a promise of future closeness.

Reflect

What have I assumed about someone I do not know well? What would I enjoy learning about her?

Practice

Ask one genuine question and listen without deciding what the relationship must become.

Pray

Lord, give me kindness and curiosity as I meet others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 2 Hope with room for truth

Read: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Consider

Paul calls the church to exercise its gifts in love. His description brings patience, kindness, hope, and truth together. We can be hopeful about friendship without turning a wish into an obligation someone has never accepted. Clear agreements can still carry reasonable expectations.

Reflect

What am I hoping for in a friendship? Have I communicated a need or quietly assigned someone a role?

Practice

If appropriate, express one need as a clear request that leaves room for an honest answer.

Pray

God, help my hope remain patient and honest. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 3 Consider your steps

Read: Proverbs 14:15

Consider

This proverb values thoughtful judgment. In our relationships, we can let experience inform trust without making every interaction a test. Notice follow-through, care with confidence, and willingness to repair mistakes. One person need not meet every need in our lives.

Reflect

Where has someone shown reliability? What particular kind of trust has actually developed between us?

Practice

Acknowledge one dependable act or consider a realistic next step in sharing responsibility.

Pray

Lord, teach me to notice faithfully and avoid hasty conclusions. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 4 Let clarity help care

Read: Romans 12:9–10 and 12:17–18

Consider

Sincere love takes care with conduct and seeks peace where possible. As an application, we can describe what happened and ask for what would help. We do not have to claim knowledge of a person's motives. We can also listen when someone raises a concern about our own actions.

Reflect

Is there an unspoken expectation I could clarify? Is there a concern I need to hear without becoming defensive?

Practice

Clarify one plan or request kindly, or make appropriate repair for a misunderstanding.

Pray

Father, give me courage to speak gently and listen well. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 5 Be thoughtful about entrusting

Read: John 2:23–25

Consider

John emphasizes Jesus' knowledge of people when He does not entrust Himself to those responding to His signs. We cannot know hearts as He does. The passage invites careful thought about entrusting; it does not give us a formula for suspicion. We can be warm while choosing a pace for sharing that fits what we know.

Reflect

What am I ready to share freely? What needs more time, privacy, or evidence of reliability?

Practice

Choose one thoughtful limit or next step without turning it into a judgment of someone's worth.

Pray

Jesus, give me humility about what I know and wisdom about what I entrust. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 6 Offer what you can honestly give

Read: Romans 12:18

Consider

Paul recognizes that peace is not entirely within our control. We are responsible for our own conduct. In our friendships, that includes being honest about availability. A smaller commitment we can honor may provide more care than an open promise that leaves us exhausted or absent.

Reflect

What can I actually offer in this season? Where would an honest answer help someone understand my capacity?

Practice

Keep or clarify one commitment. Offer an alternative only if you can realistically provide it.

Pray

Lord, help me give honest attention within my real capacity. In Jesus' name, amen.

Day 7 Receive and enjoy friendship

Read: Romans 12:15–16

Consider

Community includes sharing joy and sorrow. We can enjoy coffee, a laugh, or a celebration without analyzing what every moment means. Receiving care gives another woman room to contribute. Thoughtful boundaries can help us show up with the attention we truly have.

Reflect

What kindness could I receive with gratitude? What ordinary moment of connection would I enjoy this week?

Practice

Accept an appropriate offer of help or make a manageable invitation for shared enjoyment.

Pray

God, thank You for friendship. Help me receive care and share joy freely. In Jesus' name, amen.

Optional group conversation

Read Romans 12:9–18 together. Anyone may pass on a question. Discuss your own choices rather than evaluating another woman's character.

How can we begin with goodwill while allowing trust to grow through experience?

What is the difference between a hope, a clear agreement, and an unspoken assignment?

How might clarity and sincere repair strengthen a friendship?

What does a warm, honest boundary sound like in our current season?

What ordinary kindness or shared enjoyment would we like to make room for?

Close with prayer for curiosity, discernment, and the freedom to give and receive care.

Scripture readings: Romans 12:9–18; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Proverbs 14:15; John 2:23–25. Biblical descriptions are summaries; the number line is a personal illustration.