1. A New Relationship

2. A Near Relationship

3. A Never-ending Relationship

Questions for growth groups

You'll find it helpful to have heard the talk. You can listen again at bit.ly/hsbctalks.
Read Proverbs 18:24, John 15:9-17 and I Corinthians 13.

a. What associations do words like 'friend' and 'friendship' have for you?

b. "We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other." How true is this ... and, if true, what can and should we be doing about it?

c. Some can tell of the moment when they first trusted in the Lord and came to know him as a friend but for others it is a more gradual process. Does that matter? And even for those for whom it is sudden and dramatic, is there not sometimes/always a process leading up to it?

d. There are many ways of describing what coming to know the Lord is like (e.g., being blinded by his grace, waking from sleep, a reorientation of the whole person and life). Can you suggest others?

e. Do you find it easy to really listen to the other person in a conversation or, when they're speaking, are you merely preparing what to say next? What places do speaking, listening and silence have in prayer?

f. Jesus said, "I am with you always". Search the internet for the poem 'Footprints in the Sand' and read it aloud. Can you think of times in your life when it seemed that the Lord wasn't there with you?

g. Benjamin Franklin wrote, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes". James H Casson, a young Christian doctor with a terminal illness, wrote a booklet entitled *Dying: The Greatest Adventure of My Life*. Is dying and death too much of a taboo subject in our time and culture? If so, how can we set about being counter-cultural?

Read 1 Corinthians 13 again and talk to your Forever Friend about what it says.