

EVERYONE NEEDS A FRIEND

I approached the doors to the church with one clear thought in my mind: “If I don’t find a friend at church today, I’m never coming back.” I had attended church with a friend a few times before, but this was the first time I attended as an investigator by myself and *for* myself. I felt I needed to join the Church, but I had several fears and concerns.

When I entered the church, I was greeted by a young adult with a big smile and a hearty handshake. He introduced himself as Dane McCartney. I had seen Dane before, when he had tried out for the college football team I played for. My anxiety vanished when he invited me to sit with him during the Church meetings. He also invited me to his parents’ home for dinner afterward. I never had a chance to feel alone that day. Dane and his family reached out to me and helped answer many of my questions. I joined the Church a few weeks later.

Had Dane just been friendly to me that day, I probably would have left church after sacrament meeting and given up, thinking that I had given it a shot but that church just wasn’t for me. While it’s certainly important to be friendly, being a *friend* involves more than just being nice. The McCartneys’ love and support was important to my conversion.

That was 14 years ago. Since then I have served a full-time mission, been married in the temple, and been

blessed with five wonderful children. I have also served as a bishop and a stake president. I have counseled with members who stopped coming to church because they felt alone and didn’t have any friends at church. My heart breaks for them. I wish someone would have reached out to them like

the McCartneys did to me.

I thank my Heavenly Father that Dane befriended me that day. I hope we will all take courage to be friends to those who are investigating the Church, are new to it, or are returning to it. ■

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Dane showed me that being a friend involves more than just being nice.

