



## **Friends of the Bride and Groom**

### **John 3:22-30**

*He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled (John 3:29—KJV).*

*He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full (John 3:29—NASB).*

*He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled (John 3:29—NRSV).*

Do the followers of Jesus Christ see themselves as friends of the bridegroom? Though today we have shortened “bridegroom” to “groom,” the titles mean the same. What does the friend of the bridegroom normally do? If he is also the best man at the wedding, and John the Baptist would have been too humble to call himself “a best man,” the best man stands ready to serve the groom in every way possible before and after the wedding ceremony. All the groom's friends would be ready to do the same. Since Jesus is the bridegroom and the New Testament calls the Church the “Bride of Christ,” surely everyone in the Church can consider themselves friends of Jesus and the Church. After the wedding, the special work of the best man eventually comes to an end, but the friendship of a true friend never ends. The work of John the Baptist eventually came to an end, but he acted as a friend of Jesus throughout all the time he knew Him. John described how a friend of Jesus would act. First, a friend of Jesus will always stand ready to serve Jesus. At a wedding the needs of the bride and groom come first, and all their friends rejoice at their happiness and make themselves ready to be of service. Second, a friend of Jesus will joyfully anticipate hearing Jesus' voice and His call to be of service. They will read the Bible to learn how they can best serve the groom and the bride: Jesus and the Church.

## Thinking Further

1. In the early stages of Jesus' ministry, why might it have been important for Him to have His disciples baptizing in Judea somewhere near John the Baptist and his ministry in Judea?
2. Why do you think John the Baptist's disciples expressed concern that increasing numbers, indeed "all," they said, were going to Jesus?
3. What does "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven" mean to you?
4. Why was John's joy fulfilled?
5. How did John the Baptist express his humility to his disciples, and what effect might that have had on them?