

# Has the meaning of friendship changed since the times of Epicurus

**Post by “Don” of May 22, 2023 at 11:15 PM**

One thing to keep in mind in this thread is that people were \*really\* literally dependent on family and friends in ancient Greece. There was little or no government support in the sense of assistance.

Later, "In the Roman Empire, the first emperor Augustus provided the Cura Annonae or grain dole for citizens who could not afford to buy food every month. Social welfare was enlarged by the Emperor Trajan. Trajan's program brought acclaim from many, including Pliny the Younger. Other provisions for the poor were introduced during the history of Ancient Rome." ([Wikipedia](#))

If you were orphaned, widowed, disabled in an accident, you were up the proverbial creek without a paddle IF you didn't have friends or family to take care of you. That's one of the reasons Epicurus places so much importance on solid, mutually-beneficial friendships. You knew you had a social support system. Friendships based on politics or convenience would not be of any help if the friendship was no longer politically beneficial to one party.

That's not too say that Epicurean friendships were not warm, loving, respectful, caring, etc. They no doubt were. Epicurus himself makes provisions in his will for his friend's children! But that larger societal context is important to keep in mind.