

Water of Life Community Church

LOVE AND COMMUNITY

JOHN 13:34-35

ICEBREAKER

PRAYER

WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Love is the defining mark of biblical community, and everything else flows from it. Our God is love, and He commands us to show His unconditional love to the watching world by modeling Jesus' love for us. Our society is often confused when it comes to love, so it's up to us to show true love by the way we interact with one another. We can do this by supporting one another, sacrificing for one another, sharing with one another, and submitting to one another.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

1. READ JOHN 13:34.

Jesus and his disciples had joined together to celebrate the Passover feast in which Jesus reminded His disciples that he was going to suffer and die on the cross. Given that Jesus' remaining time with His disciples on earth was coming to a close, Jesus delivered to them a "new" command.

- a. Does it surprise you that love is something Jesus had to command? Why or why not?
- b. Who is our "one another"? How do our love for God and our love for one another go hand in hand?
- c. Read Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:34-40. What was new about the commandment to "love one another," which He gave in John 13?

The biblical command to love our neighbors as ourselves is not a new commandment (Leviticus 19:18). By the time Jesus spoke John 13:34-35, He had already cited love for neighbors as one of the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:34-40). Jesus even taught us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48). So what was new about the command in John 13:34? The answer is in Jesus' words: "just as I have loved you." The disciples were to love one another according to Jesus' model. But little did they know the depth of love Jesus was about to demonstrate.

d. What did Jesus mean when He said for the disciples to love one another in the same way He loved them?

e. Look at John 13:1-17. What characterized the love Jesus had for His disciples in this scene? Similarly, what characterized the love Jesus showed us in going to the cross?

From what we read before and after John 13:34-35, we see what it means to love as Jesus has loved us. In John 13:1-17, Jesus modeled humility by washing the feet of His disciples. After giving the command to love one another, Jesus went to the cross. Laying down His life for us was a great act of love. His humble service and His sacrifice fill the word "love" with the meaning it is to have for us.

f. How might thinking deeply about what Christ has done for us cause us to truly love others?

2. READ JOHN 13:35.

a. What are the ramifications of Jesus' statement in this verse? What's riding on our ability to demonstrate love?

b. What message do believers give to the world when they show love for one another? What message do they give when they fail to show love for one another?

c. How does our love for one another glorify God?

As followers of Christ, our motivation for expressing love is Jesus' example, which means our love, too, must be demonstrated through action. Loving one another through humble, sacrificial service can be a powerful witness to the world that we are His and that it is good to be His. Through our visible expressions of love, non-Christians should be able to see the love of an invisible God.

d. Why is it essential that we live in community with other Christians if we hope to cultivate Christlike love for others?

Work as a group to brainstorm a short list of some of the "one another" commands of the Bible (If your group has trouble, have volunteers read the following verses for some examples: 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:32, 5:19, 5:21; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:8, 5:5; 1 John 4:11-12).

e. How might obeying these "one another" commands demonstrate Christ-like love for others? What kind of testimony might we leave by taking these commands to heart?

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

How might faithfully participating in our group help us to be intentional in the way that we love other believers?

What are some practical ways we could demonstrate love for one another in our group? How might our group express love for the larger body of Christ at our church?

How is loving one another in the church essential to our witness to those outside the church? What needs to change about the way you love others so that you might be a better witness for Christ?

Close your time by thanking God for redeeming you and allowing you to live a life filled with hope and holiness based on your relationship with God. Pray that in these days where hopelessness abounds, your community would be transformed by the holiness of God working through you.

GOING DEEPER / WEEKLY CHALLENGE

REFLECT

- Ask God to show you how you can love others different than yourself with more of the love you have received from Christ.

RESPOND

- Think of ways of thinking you can practically change that will release you to show the love of God with someone who does not look like you.
- Demonstrate this week the love that lets all people know that you are Jesus' disciple.

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MEMORY VERSE

John 13:34-35, New International Version (NIV)

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."