

PRACTICING A ONE ANOTHER CULTURE

Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Title: Love One Another as I Have Loved You

Date preached: September 13, 2026

Opening prayer: Father, we pray that you would strengthen us with power through your Spirit in our inner being, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Root us and establish us in your love, and grant us your power, together with all your people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, to know this love that surpasses knowledge, to be transformed by this love and be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Opening question: What are you hoping for as we learn about practicing one another culture?

Sermon Focus: The sermon this week begins the series “Practicing a One Another Church Culture”. The series begins with love and the command of Jesus, “love one another as I have loved you”. (John 13:34-35) The apostle John said this in a similar way, “We love because He has first loved us”. (1 John 4:19) We are loved by God, this love changes us and this love must be expressed through us to others as a witness to the love of God. The love of God is known because it is seen.

Sermon Question:

- What part of the sermon has stayed with you since Sunday?
OR What challenged, encouraged, or surprised you in the sermon?

Scripture reading: John 13:34-35

Optional expanded reading: John 13:1-38

Scripture Context: Our scripture this week comes from the gospel of John. Jesus uttered these words shortly after he had washed the disciples’ feet and Judas had left the Passover gathering of Jesus we refer to as the ‘Last Supper’ heading to the chief priest to betray Jesus. Jesus tells the remaining disciples that he will be with them only a short while and they can’t now go where he is going. This statement signals to the disciples and to us the importance of this new commandment. As a matter of fact, the first part of Jesus statement, ‘love one another’ was not a new command at all – it is included in Moses’ book of the Law, Leviticus, in verse 19:18. What is new is that the disciples have personally experienced the love of Jesus in their time with Him – it is the humble, servant of all love of Jesus that the disciples are commanded to practice once Jesus returns to the Father. This love for one another becomes the mark, Jesus says (Jn 13:35), by which the world will distinguish those who belong to Jesus from those who do not.

Word in focus: Love - **Agapáo** (ἀγαπάω) – wholehearted, unconditional, devoted love.

This is the highest form of love among the three distinct Greek words commonly translated into English as love. Unlike *Eros* (passion) and *Phileo* (friendly or brotherly love), **Agapáo** is not dependent upon the worthiness of the recipient, it comes from the worthiness of God and the faithfulness of God's character, rather than that of the recipient.

Questions:

1. What have you learned from previous teaching or study of the Bible about God's love for humanity? Can you recall examples of Jesus demonstrating God's love in tangible ways? How would you distinguish the type of love of God practices from the ways people express love for others?
2. Read John 13:34. What does this commandment mean for you in your daily life? How is it reflected in your thoughts and actions?
3. Read John 1:12-17. How does knowing that you are God's beloved child help you to fulfill the new commandment Jesus gave His followers in John 13:34?
4. Loving one another doesn't always mean agreeing with one another or even liking one another. What makes it difficult to love someone in our church community, and what might loving that person as Jesus loves us look like in practice?
5. Think about the people who are newer, lonely, hurting, overlooked, or on the margins of our church community. What could we personally do this week to help someone experience the love of Christ through us?
6. Jesus says that our love for one another is how the world will recognize that we are His disciples (John 13:35). What are some practical ways people in our church can "see" the love of Jesus through the way we treat one another?

Sharing life together: What should your group know about your life right now? How can we pray for one another?

Closing prayer: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.