



loving

This discussion guide includes preparation BEFORE the group and some guidance DURING the group meeting. Preparation before the group will help you, your leader, and your group to engage and respond to the living and active Word of God.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

Pray & read Exodus 34.1-7; 1 John 3

What stands out to you from these readings?

Are you puzzled about anything in these readings?

How do these readings make you **feel**?

What do you **think** in response to these readings?

What will you **do** in response to these readings?

a taste of theology pre-reading: In *Personal ministry that counts: how to love and serve each other*, [Matthias Media, in the Tony Payne Collection, 2017, p412], Tony Payne writes: The motivation and basis of personal ministry is love: love is the key mark of Christian behavior. ... (1 John 3.11-24) In summary, the Christian idea of love means seeking the good of the other person, even at the expense of my own good. 1. Love is part of the bedrock teaching of Christianity, for the very beginning. It's an absolute. A new commandment I give unto you—to love one another... said Jesus (John 13.34). If you call yourself a Christian, it is not optional. 2. Love is defined and truly known in seeing what Christ did. ... He laid down his life for others—that's what love is. It's active, sacrificial service for someone else's good. ... 3. Love is truly active. It is easy to talk about it, even to have a seminar about it. But real love issues in action, in doing something rather than simply talking about it. ... You'll see [true love] where people are actively putting themselves out for the good of others.

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS: Pray for your discussion time

our **loving** core value

We delight in **loving** others and so reflecting the God who is love. God calls us to use our gifts, our time and resources to serve and care for one another and the world. As followers of Jesus we prize love, justice and mercy.

▸ Do you think/feel this core value reflects what really matters to you as an individual and as a member of this church? Why/why not?

1. **the God who is love** | read Exodus 34.1-7; Psalm 103; Nehemiah 9

▸ What do we learn about the LORD God from these readings?

2. **knowing that God is love** | read John 3.16-18

▸ How do we know that God is love? (John 3.16 is best translated 'For, this is how God loved the world... the 'so' is simply a statement of how, not how much. Our response should be Wow! God is that loving! **NOT** Wow! God loves me so much!)

3. growing in love | In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul finishes with these words: *Therefore, my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.* Loving is a core value because love is the heart of being able to **Always** give yourselves **fully** to the work of the Lord.

▸ read 1 John 3 | Why is it lavish love that we should be called Children of God? Just because we are Children of God does that mean we are immediately perfect? What has Jesus done for us when we are unloving/sinful and what is our response? (vv1-6)

▸ What does persistent and deliberate unloving or loving behavior tell us? (vv7-15)

▸ What does love look like? (vv16-18)

▸ Our unloving behaviours are sin. In this we are simultaneously condemned and yet confident before God. Why are both these truths helpful? Discuss the comfort and encouragement of verse 23: (vv18-24)

PRAY!

