

Connect Group Questions

Gospel Journeys – Indifference to Purpose, in Love

Read 1 John 4:7-21

1 Love Defined (God is love) – Read verses 7 & 8 again.

*The sermon began with the question, "What is love?" The apostle John helps us answer this by declaring that love comes from God; and, in fact, **God is Love**.*

Q – How might people around you - family, friends, neighbours, or even the checkout person at the supermarket – think about love?

Q – Have you ever thought about love, not just as something God gives, but as something describing his very nature? How would does this shape how we give & receive love?

Q – Can someone who doesn't know God still experience or express real love? What does Scripture suggest about this? How might God still be at work in people's lives even if they don't recognise Him as the source of love?

2 Love Demonstrated – Read verses 9-12.

The apostle John makes it clear that our calling isn't only to receive God's love, but to actively show that love to others. Love is meant to be the visible evidence of our relationship with God - part of our witness to the world.

Q – Do you agree that part of our purpose as Christians is to actively demonstrate God's love to others, not just receive it? What might that look like in everyday life?

Q – Why do you think it can sometimes be difficult to love, even as followers of Christ?

3 Love Declared – Read verses 19-21.

John, the "Apostle of Love," is clear in his message: our love for God must overflow into love for others. Such love is both the evidence of God's work in us and a declaration of His presence & purpose for us - including sharing our faith - through our lives and relationships.

Q – Many people say they believe in God but choose not to attend church or gather with other believers, saying their faith is a private matter.

- How do we respond to this idea in light of John's teaching?
- Do you think a faith that remains completely private is missing something essential?
- How might we gently encourage someone like this to become more open in declaring their faith?

God understands the challenges we face in loving others and sharing our faith - Jesus himself walked this earth and experienced those same difficulties. Sometimes we may need to offer or receive forgiveness before we can love and speak freely.

Q – Is there someone in your life you find it hard to love or to share your faith with? How do John's words challenge or encourage you in that situation? What small steps could help move you toward love and witness in that relationship?

Reflection

Suggest people close their eyes and consider what has been discussed during the gathering - particularly on the words of John. Allow 2-3 mins for quiet reflection. Then read aloud these words of Jesus.

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' (Jn 8:12)

'Do not worry about how or what you should speak because God will give you the words to speak, for it is NOT you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you' (Matt 10:19-20)

Ask the group members to reflect upon these words of Jesus, and what God's Holy Spirit might be wanting to say to them. [Allow a period of time for reflection]

Prayer

Loving God,

In this quiet moment, we pause - aware of the deep need for love in our world, and mindful of your heart that longs for all to know your love.

Forgive us, Lord, for the times we take your love for granted - when we fail to acknowledge you, or do not demonstrate or declare your love. Forgive us also when we don't forgive others, despite all the forgiveness we have experienced from you, and don't love others like you do.

Open our eyes to see your love more clearly, and open our hearts to reflect that love more generously to those around us.

Help us to be light, in dark places; bringing hope to those in need; and love to all we meet, through our demonstration and declaration of your love. May our lives more closely reflect the love that you are and guide us to continue to reflect upon your love in this coming week.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

AMEN