



Bible study

Loving our Christian family

John 13:31-38

This study looks at the same passage as the sermon outline (p. 18-19). It can be used before or after hearing the sermon, or separately. If it is used without the sermon, it may be helpful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. The section at the end entitled "Digging deeper" is intended for those who would like to explore the passage in more depth and in its wider context.



INTRODUCTION

1. What stories have you heard of Christians being persecuted for their faith? How did you react to them?
2. How important do you think it is to love other Christians? What, if anything, stops you from making this a high priority? (See also question 13 below.)

READ JOHN 13:31-32

3. To what event is Jesus referring in these verses? (See John 12:32.) What is He going to do for God, and what will God then do for Him? (See also question 14 below.)
4. How are we to follow Jesus on His journey to glory? (See 1 John 3:16.) What does this mean for how we relate to other Christians?

READ JOHN 13:34-35

5. What is Jesus' command* to His disciples in these verses? In what way/s is this a new commandment?
6. What basis and model does Jesus give us for our love for one another? And what impact will it have on those who witness it?

7. How can we express this love for one another in practical ways? How might we show it towards Christians who suffer badly on account of Christ? Why is it important for our witness to non-Christians?

READ JOHN 13:33, 36-38

8. Jesus says that His disciples cannot follow Him where He is going. What does it mean to follow Him? (See verses 31-32.) Why do you think the disciples cannot do so at this point?
9. When will Jesus' disciples be able to follow Him? What will enable them to do so, when they could not before? (See John 14:16-17.)
10. What does a life laid down for others look like? How do you think we can draw on the resources God supplies for us to live like this?

CONCLUSION

11. Try to sum up what you have learned from this passage. Why should we love other Christians? How should we do it? And how *can* we do it?
12. Share one action that you can now take in response to this teaching. Can you do something to help persecuted Christians?

DIGGING DEEPER

13. In the Gospels, whom does Jesus call us to love? (If you get stuck, look up Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 5:44; John 15:12.) Which of these people do you find it easiest / hardest to love? Why?
14. Look up some of the references to "glory" in John's Gospel. (See 1:14; 2:11; 11:4; 12:41; 17:4-5, 10, 22, 24.) What is Jesus' "glory"? What does it mean for *us* to glorify God?
15. Think about what happens to Peter later in the Gospel. (See John 18:10-11, 15-18, 25-27; 20:1-10; 21, esp. verses 15-22.) Compare Jesus' words to him in chapter 21 with those in chapter 13. How are they different, and what has made the difference?
16. The first letter of John contains lots more teaching on loving our fellow Christians. Look at one or both of the key passages (3:11-18; 4:7-21). What do they add to John 13:31-38?

Further reading

For further explanation of this passage, please see the following:

C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John*, 2nd edition. London: SPCK, 1978, pp. 449-453.

George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Word Biblical Commentary), 2nd edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999, pp. 246-248.

*The Greek word *agapao* is used many times in John's Gospel to refer to the sacrificial love of God and of Jesus, and to the love of His disciples in response to that love.