



How We Love in the Church

*Group Discussion Guide
Week of April 21, 2024*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WOMEN'S SUMMER HANGOUT

*Saturday, May 4 | 10am
The Ivy Place*

Join the women of Citizens Church at The Ivy Place for our summer hangout. We'll be cutting and making our own flower bouquets. There is no cost to join us, but bouquets cost \$15-\$25, so plan accordingly. Also, bring a picnic lunch for yourself, as we'll enjoy time eating together afterwards! Register online to let us know you're coming and be sure to mark if you need help finding a carpool!

CITIZENS BASICS

*Sunday, May 12 | 11am-11:45am
Dowd YMCA*

We offer Citizens Basics on the 2nd Sunday of every month for anyone who is new to the life of our church. This is a great chance to get more information about who we are as a church, as well as meet some of our pastors and leaders. Snacks and childcare is provided, but please register in advance.

FAMILY MEETING

*Saturday, June 1 | 4pm
Clanton Pavilion (3132 Manchester Dr, Charlotte, NC 28217)*

On Saturday, June 1st we will hold our semi-annual Family Meeting. This is a chance for us as a church to celebrate God's faithfulness, to commemorate what He is doing in our church, to worship together, and to look for what God might do in the months ahead.

This year, we are doing it church potluck style! Citizens will be providing pulled pork for dinner. If your last name starts with A-N bring a side, if O-Z bring a dessert to share!

VISION FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Citizens Community Groups gather on a regular basis to help each other follow Jesus. When we gather for discussions like this one, our primary aim is not to simply talk about some good ideas or share our opinions, but to wrestle with the real state of our hearts and how to become doers of the Scriptures and followers of Jesus.

To that end, there are three ground rules that make for a good discussion:

- 1. Be Earnest.** We're here to encounter God, so we are not satisfied with trite conversation.
- 2. Be Honest.** The gospel is good news for sinners, so we put aside false smiles or fake attitudes to share the real state of our hearts.
- 3. Be Humble.** We are all works in progress seeking to be formed into Christlikeness, so we lower our defenses, open to correction from the Scriptures and one another.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13.

- ***What stood out to you from this text?***
- ***Was there something that comforted you or convicted you?***
- ***What does this text teach us about God?***
- ***What does this text teach us about ourselves?***

DISCUSS THE SERMON

Leader Note -- while the Scriptures are clear that we should love both the Christian and non-Christian in our lives, this passage in 1 Thessalonians is specifically addressing Paul's love for a specific church, and the believers within that church. Because of that, we want to focus tonight's discussion on how to love others within Citizens Church, even if there is helpful application for our relationships outside of this local body.

In Sunday's teaching, we saw Paul's love for the believers in Thessalonica. As we saw the example of his love for them (and their love for him in return), we saw that Biblical love:

1. Longs/Wants to be with other Christians face to face
2. Is willing to sacrifice for the good of other Christians
3. Agonizes over and owns other people's discipleship to Jesus

- ***Which of these evidences of love have you experienced from other Christians? What did that mean to you, or how did God use their love in your relationship to Him?***
- ***Which of these is most absent in how you treat the other members at Citizens Church?***

Read John 13:34-35 and the quote below from Mother Theresa:

- **John 13:34-35** – 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
- **Mother Theresa** -- “These words of Jesus, ‘Even as I have loved you, also love one another,’ should be not only a light to us, but they should also be a flame. A flame consuming the selfishness that prevents the growth of holiness. Jesus ‘loved us to the end,’ to the very limit of love: the cross. This love for others then must come from within, from our union with Christ. Loving and being loved must be as normal to us as living and breathing, day after day until our death.”

The first step towards growing in our love for other Christians is to be changed by the love of Jesus for us.

- ***In what ways have you seen Christ love you (whether in Scripture or in your everyday life) and how can that spur you on to love other believers around you in the same way?***

PRACTICE

During the sermon, we were challenged to “own” the discipleship of others within our Community Group. That is, care deeply and invest in their following of Jesus.

Before closing the group discussion, take a few minutes for folks to pray, identify, and write down 2-4 people in their Community Group that they can intentionally invest in and own their discipleship over the next few months.