

# Spiritual Community: Love is the Basis

## 1) Love is the basis of spiritual community

*The Greatest Commandment: Love God & Love Your Neighbor. Matthew 22:37-39*

**DISCUSSION:** When have you experienced the difference in choosing to love versus feeling love for another? How are you choosing to love others inside and outside your spiritual community?

## 2) Only by loving others can we experience God's community

*And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. 1 John 3:23-24 ESV*

**DISCUSSION:** Do you think you are stronger on the "believe" side or the "love" side?

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:6 NIV*

**DISCUSSION:** How are you showing affection, concern, and sacrifice to others? How is Jesus abiding in you as you show love to others? Be specific.

**DISCUSSION:** Do you find it difficult to love when you know it probably won't be reciprocated? Why or why not?

**DISCUSSION:** How are you lying to yourself about the love you're showing to others?

## 3) God's desire is that we practice love within His community

*When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should give*

*special attention to those who are in the family of believers. Galatians 6:10 NCT*

**DISCUSSION:** How do you rate your love for people in the church?

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34-35 NIV*

**DISCUSSION:** Where are you failing to practice love? When was the last time you actually practiced loving someone within the church?

#### **4) Love is a never-ending obligation to the community**

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:8-10 NIV*

**DISCUSSION:** Dream a little bit. What would it look like if our love was so obvious that everyone would know we are Christians? What kinds of things would we be doing differently?

#### **Questions to help you practice love:**

What is something you could do on a Sunday to show more love?

At work?

With your family?

In small group?

When you are in public?

**DISCUSSION:** What are some opportunities that you missed this week in these areas?

**PRAYER PROJECT:** Take 5-7 minutes to be alone with God and think about your debt of love beginning with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for you. Ask God to show you the truth about your fulfillment, or lack of, to this debt. Talk to your group about what He said.