

WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

SESSION 4: CHOOSING SELF-GIVING LOVE FACILITATOR'S NOTES

CHECKLIST

- Have I got a good sense of the signposted resources? Which would be good to highlight with my group?
- Have I got the technology set up, and does it work(!)?
- Is there a visual focus I want to offer for worship this or next week – image, candle, video?
- Who is doing tea/coffee?
- Are there any notices I need to share?
- Is there anyone in my group who has pastoral needs we should be aware of at the moment?

WITH YOUR CO-FACILITATOR

- Are we using our different gifts well tonight?
- If we are running out of time, what shall we miss out or postpone?
- Who is doing what in the session? Clarity about who is leading which section really helps!
- Are we confident using DBS?
- Who among the participants can we encourage to use their gifts in leading, praying, or facilitating tonight or next week? How much preparation will they need?
- What and who do we particularly want to pray for at the moment?
- How are we offering a good variety in our worship and prayer styles?

REVIEW THE OUTCOMES FOR THIS SESSION

- To understand what Christian character is.
- To understand how Jesus reveals the distinctive nature of God's love and how God works in the world through love.
- To understand what the fruits of self-giving love might be in my lived experience.
- To reflect on the nature and challenges of my relationships with others.
- To understand the three ways God changes my character, growing Christlike love in me, in my lived experience.

FOR THIS SESSION YOU WILL NEED

- TV / Laptop / Wifi
- Ppt for session 4
- Any prayer materials or visual focus. DBS guide.
- There are two short videos in this session – check they are working.



6.30 PM PREPARING MYSELF

You might like to reflect on Romans 12: 9-13, asking God to give you self-giving love for those in your group: "9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

Take a moment to pray for each person in your group. Commit yourself to the Lord this evening. You might like to use these words:

My song is love unknown, My Saviour's love to me; Love to the loveless shown, That they might lovely be.

O who am I, That for my sake My Lord should take Frail flesh, and die?

7 PM OPENING WORSHIP

Feel free to use the suggested activity, which aims to draw on different styles, or approaches, or to do something which reflects your own context or tradition if that is more helpful. (Available on separate Worship Aims Bible passage powerpoint)

Watch the three minute video, "The Keeper of the Stream".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZqifFZYVPQ>

We have come to be changed in our characters, to draw close to God so that we might be disciples who are becoming like Christ. Let's spend a moment to ask God to change us tonight from the inside out - to give us hearts of love like His, and to clear away anything that blocks His love.

Have a minute's quiet.

Jesus said: 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.'

7.10 PM INTRODUCTION - AIMS FOR THE EVENING

(You may want to miss this out if your group is less formal, or you are using the material one to one). (Available on separate Worship Aims Bible passage powerpoint)

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7.15 PM FEEDBACK AND OPENING QUESTION

In their pairs from the end of the last session, ask people to feedback to each other how their experience of their response action(s) from last week has been - the emphasis is on mutual encouragement in accountability, not guilt!

Then in pairs ask people to discuss these questions for 5 minutes: What is the true meaning of love? When have you most seen or experienced that love?

7.25 PM CORE TEACHING CONTENT

The core content is designed to be as user-friendly, and as flexible/context-friendly, as possible. You can use the script and powerpoint provided, using your own material or approaches to reflect your context and teaching style. Because truth in the Scripture is often perceived through metaphor and story, the content will include at least one story example (although other "stories" are found in the Modelling section), and at least one visual example.

The whole of the content is produced in a booklet for each session – if you are not covering all the material, you may want to point participants to reading the booklet between sessions. It is a good idea to have a break halfway through.

What is Christian character?

What is love?

What does this show about the main way God works in the world?

How should this make Christian love distinctive?

Doesn't this make God look weak?

How do I become like Christ in my relationships?

How does this shape the church community?

Can I really become the kind of Christlike person who can agape others - loving enemies and forgiving those who hurt me?

How do I grow in wanting what God wants?

How do I give God the space to change me?

How much is God's work, and how much is mine?

Can this happen on my own?

Following the content, you may like to give people a few minutes to think of any questions or reflections on the material, then facilitate a discussion based on any points raised for 5-10 minutes. They will have reflection time in smaller groups after the video, but this gives an opportunity for initial whole-group discussion. As facilitator you are not expected to have all the answers, but can help the group explore together.

OPTIONS FOR SIMPLIFYING OR SHORTENING CONTENT

Instead of the powerpoint, you could use and discuss the question "How should this make Christian love distinctive?" and then use the character change handout.



8.20 PM MODELLING/REFLECTION

Video and own experience. Show the video and, if time share from your own experience, remembering that real struggles can be as helpful as victories!

Discuss in pairs, and then together:

How have you "come against things in the opposite spirit"? Or are there any situations you are currently facing where you need to do that? What practices are opening you up to God changing you from the inside out?

What questions do you have?

Model a response as facilitator(s) by offering your reflection first.

8.40 PM DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Matthew 5: 38-48. (Available on separate Worship Aims Bible passage powerpoint)

See the instruction sheet for how to do DBS. After you have read the passage and retold, use whatever method will enable most people to participate – talking in pairs, splitting questions up between different pairs, splitting into smaller groups with group members asking the five questions (this will disciple people through putting leading DBS into practice).

N.B. Encourage giving enough focus on the personal response questions in 3 and 4. As your group grows in trust, hopefully people will become more confident in sharing their responses together – as facilitator(s) taking the lead in this models your own discipleship and helps create openness in others.

9 PM PERSONAL RESPONSE AND ACTION FOR COMING WEEK.

Having learnt content, seen it modelled, reflected and heard each other, and listened to God in Scripture, each disciple will end with the questions, "What is God saying to me and what is my response?" Any actions they take will be self-generated. But the following week they will be encouraged at the beginning to report back to one other person.

Ask people to reflect on this in pairs – they will never have to report back to the whole group. If they wish to help one another by writing down any actions and praying for each other then encourage them to do so. There is no group feedback, but as facilitator you can share what you feel able in order to model gentle accountability and trust.



9.10 PM SIGNPOSTING

Look at the suggested follow on materials described in terms of quality and length. You may like to highlight one or two, depending on the make up of your group.

Ask people to bring Bibles with them if they have them to following sessions.

See handout "Extra Reading or Listening Suggestions" as follow up material for this week, and point people towards the Session booklets for this session and next week - you might agree on sections they read beforehand in order to free up more discussion time in the following session.

As preparation for next week watching the six minute Bible Project video on Heaven and Earth would be helpful: <https://youtu.be/Zy2AQIK6C5k>

9.15 PM CLOSING PRAYER

Use the suggested prayer or pray in whatever way is helpful.

(Available on separate Worship Aims Bible passage powerpoint) Use the verse and opening prayer from the "Preparing Myself" section.

You may like to give time for open prayer.

REVIEW AFTER GROUP HAS LEFT

What went well?

Where did I sense God's presence?

What can I do better?

Was anyone absent that I need to follow up on?

Looking ahead to next week, what might I (or the co-facilitator) share from our lived experience in the "Modelling" section?

