



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 12.02.2023

“A Sincere Love”

Preacher

Pastor Nathan Bean

Scripture

“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.” Romans 12:9

Thought

Our love for God and for each other must be sincere - and that sometimes means going against our defaults. Our modern culture has grown within us a consumer mentality - where we judge how good something is by what we can get out of it. Yet we cannot approach our Church life with this mentality.

When Paul writes about the Church, he probably wasn’t picturing a world where we review churches against our list of preferences. No, we have come to realise that Paul was writing to a prevailing Church which was called to change the mighty city of Rome with the gospel.



Our modern world aims to eliminate all pain points in our lives to make life easier. But as we grow, our pain points become people points. We start to eradicate people from our lives, we try to smooth out our human interactions. Yet as a Church, we are called to engage with people, even those who challenge us - and it's by this that we grow.

Hebrews 10:24 encourages us to spur one another on to love and good deeds. This literally means to irritate towards love and good deeds. It's when we rub against those who might cause discomfort that we truly grow.

The New Testament mentions the phrase "one another" over 50 times. We are called to 'one-another' one another. To not avoid each other for the sake of personal comfort, but to embrace the awkward, the difficult, the challenging for the sake of connection and relationship. This involves breaking our consumerist mindset and moving towards one another in love.

The Love of the New testament is not a feelings-based love. It's an action-based love. What truly counts is our actions and choices towards one another, regardless of our feelings.

Let us not wait for our feelings to catch up to our actions. Let us express the character of Christ towards each other, our community, our cities and the nations through our choices and deeds. Let our love be demonstrated in action.

"love as distinct from 'being in love' — is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit"
- C.S. Lewis, 'Mere Christianity'

Discussion Points

1. How did the early New Testament Church express love?
2. Have you noticed the effect of a consumerist worldview in your own life?
3. What do you think it would look like if the Church (as a body of people)



truly loved others through choice and action regardless of feelings? What would that look like in your life?

Personal application + Prayer

Jesus,

Thank you that you loved us in a tangible, practical, sacrificial way through the giving of yourself on the cross. Lord, teach us to love like You, not looking towards comfort or self-interest, but rather loving others sincerely, giving of ourselves and spurring each other on towards love and good deeds. May we always look for the good in others, and show love regardless of our feelings.

Amen