



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 19.02.2023

“Taking the Risk of Relationship”

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

Through Romans 12, Paul paints the image of a Church that would impact the city of Rome and love differently to the society around them.

As Christ-followers, God is also calling us to be different. We’re called to be a community that loves differently within itself (expressing love to other Christians) but also outside of itself (expressing love to those who are not yet in our Christian community).

When Paul speaks of being devoted to one another, he uses a term which can most closely be related to the affection of a mother to child and a child to their mother. This type of devotion is more than mere feelings -it’s a deep connection backed by action. There is a fierceness that a mum has for a child that is like no other force on earth.



Paul calls us to love each other with that same kind of fierce love as a mum has for an infant. We are not merely an association or a club. We are a family.

Family can demand of you any time, and you don't get to choose your family. Family can challenge us about things in our lives, yet this is how we grow.

Ultimately, we can only give the love we have received. As we experience God's mercy, as we dwell in His presence and understand His grace for us, we can pour out that grace to others and that is indeed what we are called to do.

Yes, there is a risk in loving others deeply. But, let us take the risk of relationship.

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."
- C.S. Lewis, 'The Four Loves'

Discussion Points

1. How did Jesus show love to those around Him?
2. What would it look like practically for us to share Christ's love to those within the Church family?
3. What would it look like practically for us as Christians to show Christ's love to others outside of our Church family?



Personal application + Prayer

Jesus,

Thank you that you first loved me and demonstrated that love in so many ways. Let my heart be softened to your grace today, that I too might be a vessel of your grace to this world. Let my heart, my mind, and my actions reflect yours. May I truly know what it is to be devoted to one another in love, and to honour others above myself.

Amen