

The heart of an apprentice: sermon notes discussion guide

based on **John 13:31-35 and 15:12-15** (Linked to sermon of 26/09/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks



This was part of a series: Being an apprentice

Intro: This is the second in our series on being Jesus' apprentices. Traditionally we talk about being disciples but the image of being Jesus' apprentices offers us a fresh perspective on how we learn to follow Jesus. We will look at how we can learn from and practice being apprentices to Jesus. What does that look like in our day to day lives? How can we love one another as Jesus' commanded?

We will use three new headings for the sermon notes: head (looking at the Scripture and beginning to understand what it means), heart (allowing God's word to go deeper), hands (what are the practical out workings of these Scriptures?) Feel free to begin each session with a time of worship. For each set of sermon notes I will suggest a psalm, Scripture or song you can use.

Worship: Read Psalm 133 together and praise God for His provision and for one another.

Head:

Jesus' teaching so often focuses on love and its centrality to discipleship. Jesus' instructions here in John come just prior to Jesus' crucifixion as He tries to prepare them for the time when he will no longer physically be with them. In the New Testament there are a number of different words for love but in these passages Jesus uses the word "agape", the highest form of love. A sacrificial love and that which Jesus showed in giving his life for us.

Read the passages together a few times, then spend a few minutes in silent reflection before answering the questions:

- 1. Who is Jesus talking to in this passage? (an obvious question but think about the group dynamics and Judas, for instance)*
- 2. Why do you think Jesus focuses on loving one another as the disciples' preparation with life after Jesus is no longer physically with them?*
- 3. What does John 13:35 suggest will be a by-product of the disciples' love for one another?*
- 4. In John 15:12-13 how does Jesus say the disciples are to love? What example does he give?*

Heart:

Now read the passage again individually and prayerfully. Give some time for individual reflection and then share with one another, as you feel comfortable.

Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. How might you have reacted to what Jesus said? How easy do you think the disciples would find this command?

What particular verses or images resonate or leap out at you and why?

What might God be trying to say to you personally through these verses?

Just like the disciples, there will be some people we find harder to love than others. How do you think we can still obey Jesus' command? (I think John 15:5 and 10 help a bit there).

Does any of the passage make you uncomfortable? If so, begin to ask God why and what he may be saying to you through this.

Hands:

Have a look at Paul's description of agape love in 1 Corinthians 13. Try putting your name in place of the word love. It's pretty challenging! Read through the descriptors and discuss the following:

Which of these qualities of love do you find really hard to embody?

Are there certain people who spring to mind that you find particularly hard to love?

How can we love people we don't like?

We are called to "love our neighbours as ourselves". Can we really love each other if we don't love ourselves? What does self love look like for a Christian?

If there is time, split into small groups and pray for those people we find it hard to love. Ask Jesus to give you the strength and capacity to do so through the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to give you opportunities throughout the week to show His love to others as well as to experience it for yourself.

"Let all that you do be done in love" 1 Corinthians 16:14