

In: strengthening our relationships with each other - discussion guide

based on **1 Corinthians 13** (Linked to sermon of 18/9/16)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

These suggestions and questions are only a guide. Feel free to add, chop and amend as is most appropriate for your group!

This was the second part of our 'developing our church vision' series. Please see the attached handout which is another excerpt from the vision document the PCC have put together.

Intro: How are you doing at regularly praying the prayer we looked at last week (Ephesians 1.17) for each other? Why not pray it again now?

1. Which other Christian(s) are you most thankful to God for at the moment? Why?

2. Read John 13.34-35. Loving other Christians is a vital part of discipleship. Make a list of the reasons might people give for not going deeper in loving other Christians? How would you answer those reasons?

1 Corinthians was written to a congregation who were struggling to love each other – there were arguments and factions (3.3-4; 11.18), gross immorality (5.1-2), lawsuits amongst believers (6.7-8), greed and pride (11.19-21). In short, their Sunday gatherings did "more harm than good" (11.17)!

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13. The love that is described here is a sacrificial love (agape), like God's love for us. Yet none of us like to make sacrifices. What stirs your heart to be willing to love one another sacrificially?

4. Dan said that this passage assumes that pastoral care (ie loving each other) is to be done by everybody (not just a few) to everybody else (not just those we like). What do you make of that? Why?

5. Dan mentioned 8 ways the PCC want us to grow in our love for each other over the coming years (see attached handout). If your group already has prayer partnerships / triplets (the second outcome listed) – how could you encourage those to go deeper? If your group doesn't already have prayer partnerships / triplets – how could you encourage that to happen?

6. Pick one or two of the other outcomes listed and discuss them. What would help us move forward in these areas? (Do feed back!)

7. On Sunday, we asked people to fill in a 'register of helpers form' – which is a practical step we're taking towards the 5th and 6th outcomes (from question 5). If you didn't fill in one of the forms, it is attached. Fill it in now, and return it to the church office.

8. Ask everyone to look quietly at verses 4-7, thinking specifically about how they put these into practise with fellow Christians. Highlight one area which is a particular challenge to you at the moment. Share those challenges and pray for each other.