

Community Group Questions Guide

Ice Breaker (10min):

Help people to loosen up and share. Take one more week to go around and have people share their name, and what their plans are for the weekend.

Opening Prayer (5min):

- **Introduce time of prayer-** After the group welcomes one another, open in prayer. Let your group know what to expect during prayer time, something like: As we start our group time I will open with a word of prayer, there will be a minute or so of silent reflection and then I will read the scripture from Sunday and then close in prayer and we will enter into our discussion time.
 - **Open with a brief word of prayer-** God we thank you for this time together, we open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us, allow us to hear your voice and experience your spirit at work. Come Holy Spirit.
 - **Sit before the Lord in silent prayerful reflection for 1-2 minutes**
 - **Read the scripture listed below aloud for the group to reflect on.**
 - **Close in a word of prayer:** God thank you for your word, come holy spirit and allow us to understand what it means for our lives, lead us in our time of discussion together. In Christ's name, amen.

Main Scriptures from Sunday:

Romans 13:8-10 NIV: *“8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”*

Revelation 3:15-20 NIV: *15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful,*

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poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Read this message overview to the group: (5min)

Hopefully you had a chance to hear the message from Sunday. In Sunday's message Pastor Josh Bueno talked about three practices that the apostle Paul encouraged Roman Christians to live out on earth as citizens of the kingdom of God. We must not forget that Paul's main objective in writing this entire letter to the Roman Church was to see these Gentile and Jewish Christians glorify God, in one heart, in the spirit of unity. Paul teaches that each believer should love one another in light of the mercy of Christ for us all.

Here are three practices Pastor Josh centred his message upon:

1. Love your neighbor as yourself.
2. Be alert and fervently exercise love for one another.
3. Put on the armor of light and clothe yourself with Christ.

Work though these discussion questions together (30min):

- Is there one of these three points that stuck out to you the most? If so, share which one.

Read aloud for the group:

In Romans 13 Paul not only teaches these Christians how to live out their life on earth with one another, but he also gives three important reasons why they should be all the more eager to do so.

1. Why should we love our neighbor as ourself? Because it's the will of God.
2. Why should we be alert and fervently exercise love for one another? Because time is running out.
3. Why should we put on the armor of light and clothe ourselves with Christ? Because Christ's return is near.

Here's some questions to consider and respond to among yourselves as you feel comfortable:

- Is loving your neighbor hard for you to do?

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- In what ways have you looked to, or turned to Jesus for help with loving others?
- When you think of the debt to love one another as a debt that can never be paid off, how does that make you feel?
- Can you think of a way in which you can see God's daily, never ending love being poured out on your life, so you can love others?
- Why do you think Paul was so urgent in helping these Christians understand their present time, and wake up?
- Have you found yourself dozing off at times during life, oblivious to the opportunities that God may be giving you to show love toward others?
- Can you recall a time when God used someone to show love toward you? If so, how did that make you feel?
- Take 2 minutes as a group and write down in your journal or phone notes the names of two people you can spend some love on over the next week. Write down how you plan to show the love of God to them; it could be through an encouraging text message, a handwritten letter, a prayer, an invitation to lunch, or by sending them a book in the mail? You may even be able to fulfill a need they have that you're aware of. Get creative. Loving others takes thought and intentionality.

Group Prayer (10min):

- Share personal prayer requests and spend some time praying for one another as a group. Ask someone to write down prayer requests and send them out to the group to pray for one another during the week. The hope is to get your group comfortable with sharing personal prayer needs and praying for one another regularly.