SDG Sermon Discussion Guide

Sunday, September 27, 2026

Love Made Visible

Show the Love

Read/Reflect

1. Read I John 3:15-18 – What is John trying to demonstrate about God's love in this passage?
2. What does 1 John 3:16 teach us about the shape of Christian love?
3. John warns against closing our hearts when we see someone in need. What causes people to close their hearts?

Explore

4. John challenges the idea of a purely "spiritual" faith by tying love directly to material possessions and everyday actions. Why do you think it is so easy for us to default to a faith of "words and speech" rather than "actions and truth"?
5. A lifestyle focused on personal satisfaction and comfort can make us blind to the needs around us. What kinds of needs are easy for us to overlook in our church, neighbourhood, or community?
6. Where have you seen love become visible through New Life's or through someone's actions?
7. What is one need you are aware of right now that you could respond to in a practical way? How can this group encourage one another to move from good intentions to faithful action?
8. How does having an ultimate hope in God's future renewal keep us from getting burned out, cynical, or treated like we are treating people as mere "projects"?

Pray

- Pray for open eyes, generous hearts, and practical opportunities to serve people.
- Pray about one specific thing you are looking forward to or hoping to see happen in this new ministry year at New Life Church?

Leading with this Discussion Guide:

Purpose: This guide is designed to help small group leaders create a welcoming, honest, and spiritually formative conversation, helping people encounter God's love and respond together.

Suggested Group Flow

1. **Welcome and connection:** Begin with informal conversation and a simple check-in question. Help people settle before moving into deeper discussion. [10 minutes]
2. **Opening prayer:** Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the conversation, soften hearts, and help the group listen well to God and one another. [5 minutes]
3. **Read & Reflect:** Read the Bible text aloud. If possible, have two different people read it so the group can hear it more than once. Discuss the initial questions in this section. [15 minutes]
4. **Explore:** Choose the questions that best fit your group. Do not feel pressure to use every question. [35 minutes]
5. **Prayer:** Close by praying around the week's prayer focus, leaving space for personal needs and specific next steps. [10 minutes]

Facilitation Tips

- **Lead with warmth, not pressure.** Your tone matters. People are more likely to share honestly when they do not feel judged or rushed.
- **Ask follow-up questions.** Simple prompts like "Can you say more about that?" or "What made that stand out to you?" can deepen the conversation.
- **Make room for quieter voices.** Gently invite participation without putting people on the spot. You might say, "I'd love to hear from someone who hasn't shared yet."
- **Keep the conversation centred on Scripture.** Personal stories are valuable but regularly bring the group back to the passage and the big idea.
- **Protect the group from fixing mode.** When someone shares vulnerably, encourage listening, empathy, and prayer before advice.
- **End with action.** Each week should move toward a concrete response, even if it is small.

Guidelines for Group Safety and Care

- **Confidentiality matters.** Remind the group that personal stories shared in the group should not be repeated outside the group without permission.
- **Do not force vulnerability.** Invite honesty but allow people to share at their own pace.
- **Respond to pain with care.** If someone shares something heavy, thank them, pause, and pray. Follow up privately if needed.
- **Know when to seek additional support.** If someone reveals a serious pastoral, mental health, safety, or crisis concern, do not carry it alone. Encourage them to connect with appropriate church leadership or professional support.
- **Keep Christ central.** The goal is not merely better discussion, but deeper formation in the love and way of Jesus.