

I Love My Church

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

While there is no perfect church, the church of Jesus Christ plays an essential role in God's plan for redeeming and restoring his world. In this series, we will see the part the church should play in our lives as followers of Jesus.

I Love My Church Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of Sermon & Life Group
1	3/31	Love the Church
2	4/7	(Socials)
3	4/14	Devoted to the Church

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Devoted to the Church

The Big Idea

We are called to be devoted to the church.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: What is an activity or hobby that you have devoted a lot of time to over the years?

Move #1: Let's begin the discussion by reflecting back on Sunday's sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the message this weekend?
2. How would you define devotion? What does it look like when someone is devoted to something?

Move #2: Let's start by looking at a passage that talks about how in Christ, we have each been gifted uniquely in order to fulfill the work of the Church and discuss what it looks like to be devoted to one another as part of the Church body.

Read Romans 12:4-16 (NIV)

4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, 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.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

3. We have each been given gifts that we can devote to building up the Church. How are you currently using your gifts as part of the church body?
4. Do you ever find yourself wishing God had gifted you differently? How so?
5. Verse 9 says that "Love must be sincere." What does it look like to sincerely love the family of God?

6. In reference to verse 10, how can we truly be devoted to our church family in a consumer-minded culture in which people are always looking for something new or better?
7. How can we grow our zeal for serving the Lord by being committed mission partners at our church?
8. Verse 13 tells us to practice hospitality. What does it look like to practice hospitality to people within the church? How have you experienced this within our church family?
9. What could it look like to extend Christian hospitality to the to our neighbors, coworkers, or classmates? Describe a way you or others could do this.

Move #3: To experience church as a family requires a sacrifice of time and effort, which can be difficult for people who are already busy. Let's end our study with a passage where Jesus says that his family (the church) is worth far more than anything we give up to be a part of it.

Read Mark 10:29-30 (NIV)

29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.

10. What are some ways that you have seen our life group show devotion to one another like family?
11. What are some ways that our group could be more devoted to one another like family?
12. How can our devotion to the church as a family serve as a witness and a magnet to people who do not have that in their own lives?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Do something with someone from your church family this week outside of life group. Possible ideas could be: Meet up with someone to take a walk. Go to coffee or lunch. Have someone over for dinner. Offer to watch someone's kids so they can have an evening out. Etc.
2. "Erase the red" by meeting an important need in our church family.
3. "Be Devoted" by becoming a mission partner.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On Romans 12:4-8:

Let's be honest: Certain areas of church ministry seem more enticing than other, depending on your personality and gifting. As a result, we may tend to view those more exciting roles as somehow better than the others. But comparison breeds envy—and God didn't design us to be all the same. In some cases, people in those glamorous roles hold themselves in high esteem and promote the notion that their roles are most important. This stirs up envy and resentment in others, who feel their gifts or ministry don't get the same level of recognition. It can also cause them to devalue their own gifts—the very ones God entrusted to them for service to the church. Instead of a healthy body working smoothly, as God designed, you have parts working against each other as they try to be something they were never intended to be.

The key to preventing this kind of dysfunction is celebrating the importance of each role, whether it is in the spotlight or behind the scenes. Paul reminds us that every part is necessary. If even a few don't do their part, the body becomes dysfunctional. Notice that this kind of division is not necessarily driven by behavior as much as it is by our thinking. It goes back to that same renewing of our minds—no longer being conformed to the patterns of this world. Paul's reference in 12:6 to believers having different gifts according to grace is not to point to degrees of grace but to the sovereign administration of grace. Just as the potter can shape the clay as he or she sees fit (9:21), so too can God distribute gifts to His people.

On Romans 12:9-16:

This next section may appear to be nothing more than a long list of random exhortations, but the structure Paul uses in the Greek is very difficult to capture naturally in English. In short, 12:9–13 are one long sentence—just one, with one overarching idea: Love should be genuine. All the rest of the sentence provides practical examples of what authentic love looks like in action.

In other words, instead of concentrating on abhorring evil or being fervent in spirit or enduring affliction, the structure of the text portrays all of these as flowing from genuine love. This kind of love is the wellspring, the source out of which all good things flow. Conversely, without authentic love, all efforts to pursue these other things will fail....

What does honest love look like in action? It turns from the evil that would draw us toward hypocrisy in the first place. It devotes itself to brotherly love and esteeming one another. Instead of lagging in diligence, it is fervent in spirit, serving the Lord and rejoicing in hope. When faced with persecution, it endures and devotes itself to prayer. It contributes to the needs of other believers and offers hospitality.

In 12:14 Paul shifts to another overarching command that continues his theme of our relationships with each other. Generally speaking, these commands focus on esteeming others more than ourselves, in keeping with the exhortation of 12:3. Paul reinforces the command to bless those who persecute you by reframing the statement both positively and negatively. (Steven Runge, *High Definition Commentary: Romans*)