

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday August 31st, 2014

With a grateful heart for a week of Sunshine, we entered His presence to Praise Him. Our worship was lively and encouraging, Pastor Don shared prayer requests and announcements, then prayed: 'Dear heavenly Father we are grateful for the love you have showed us through your Son, give us your eyes and your ears to see and listen to the needs of others and your words to bring them hope, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.'

The greatest need of every human is to love and be loved. God placed that need in our hearts for a reason it is to express His love to us and through us. His love is complete and is the only love that can truly satisfy the human soul, His love is described in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7; Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. As you can see God is the perfect example to follow when it comes to loving and being loved. The more Love you give, the more love you receive.

Genuine expressions of love vary from person to person, it could be little things like a smile, a hug, a card with encouraging words, a small gift or helping your spouse with a simple task, calling a friend just to catch up on how they are doing, these little acts of love can mean a great deal. The three factors to consider when wanting to show love are #1 avoid being offensive, #2 really care about others and #3 speak your love in word and action. As Christians we represent what godly love is supposed to look like and we must be careful on how we do it so as to not bring shame to God or deter others from coming to Him, (2 Corinthians 6:3). Our actions should ultimately glorify Jesus' love for all of us and show the change He brings in each of our lives. When others look at us it may be the only Bible some people have read in a long time. An old saying goes 'Preach at all times and use words when necessary'. Too much talk is not always valuable, but a little wise advice goes farther than a whole mouthful of bad advice, and when that wise advice is backed up by example it is priceless! (Proverbs 10:19-21).

One word of caution, when we condemn one another, that is offensive, yes the word says to correct and instruct our fellow believers, but it must be done only after we ourselves have made our hearts right with God and are living by His example of love, (2 Corinthians 6:6). When we consider with love and patience each other's weaknesses we will avoid doing or saying things that could make someone else fall into sin. For instance if a friend coming to dinner is trying to stay sober we certainly will not serve alcohol at the table now would we? If we see someone struggling with sin we ought to approach them in love and offer our loving support instead of harsh criticism or temptations, (Romans 14:13).

In society today it may seem strange to look out for our neighbour, it is more of a 'Look out for #1' mentality in many cases, but that is not what God intended for us, He created us for loving and caring for the world. This is why He sent his Son Jesus to us as a perfect example of love so we can re-establish what love and care for each other should look like. Jesus sacrificed His life for us, there is no greater selfless love than that, (Philippians 2:3-5). None of us are better or more important than the next to God, he values us equally hence He sent His Son for all of us, so we ought to be humble and share God's grace with one another, (Galatians 6:2-3). Jesus gave us a new commandment, to Love one another as He loved us, (John 13:34-35). He told us that this proves we belong to Him. Let's look around us we can see many who need love, even those with a hard exterior. More often than not they are the ones who need it the most. If we remain angry at people who are difficult it will not help anyone's faith or transmit God's love, (Proverbs 10:21, 12:16, 15:1).

Beloved when a church works together in peace people will see there is something different and when they witness forgiveness and genuine love in action they will be more convinced that Jesus' love changes people for the better. It is equally important to tell people we love them as it is to show that we love them, our gentle words should match our serving hands; actions prove our words are not just empty flattery. God has given each of us different abilities and gifts in order to serve one another in love. Do we know anyone who needs help? Therefore whatever the gifts, let us use them with all the strength that God supplies, more importantly, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins, then everything we do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. Asherey Shalom!

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