

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

May 28, 2023

Growing In Community

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is your very favorite meal?

➤ EXPLORATION

Have you ever looked through the photos on your phone and noticed how many pictures you have of yourself or other people sitting around a table? There are a lot of important things that happen around tables; family events, games with friends, food, fun, etc. For most of us, there have been significant conversations and a great deal of laughter while enjoying the company of others at the table. It is a powerful thing for God's people to share their lives together.

We are going to spend time in 1 Peter again this week. It's important to remember that this book was written to people who were living in difficult times, they were experiencing intense persecution for their faith. Every day they had to decide whether they would withdraw and protect themselves or continue to boldly follow and serve Jesus.

1 Peter 4:7 (From your bible, read aloud)

Peter warns that a new season was coming and they needed to be alert, prayerful and ready for what was ahead.

1 Peter 4:8 (From your bible, read aloud)

This seems like a strange way to respond to the message that the end of all things is near. Many of us would likely want to run and hide, but Peter tells his readers that **above all**, they are called to love each other deeply.

This kind of love is not easy. Peter is calling us to love in a way that extends ourselves with earnest intent. This is a sacrificial kind of love that only happens with a deep commitment. We see this clearly in the love of Christ.

1 John 4:19-21 (From your bible, read aloud)

What stands out to you from this passage?

The bible calls this kind of love "agape." Agape love is always shown by what it does, it involves action. There is an interesting concept in the New Testament sometimes referred to as a Love Feast. While it may sound like something from the 1960's hippie movement, a Love Feast was actually a beautiful expression of agape.

Acts 2:42-47 (From your bible, read aloud)

Agape love in action includes actions of sacrifice, commitment, encouragement and protection. It is costly and it is a choice.

Who do you know that shows this kind of love?

1 Peter 4:9 (From your bible, read aloud)

The New Testament word for “hospitality” is “philozenia” and comes from a compound of “love” and “stranger.” Hospitality has its origin, literally, in love for outsiders.

Love for fellow Christians is important, but it may not be all that impressive. Loving those who love you is something even unbelievers do. But showing love to outsiders requires a true life-change.

When was the last time you did something kind for a complete stranger?

Romans 12:13 (From your bible, read aloud)

We are called to “practice” hospitality. There was an expectation in the early church and throughout many cultures in history for a believer in Christ to be a hospitable person. This hospitality is also meant to be done without grumbling.

Jesus gave us many examples of what this kind of hospitality looks like:

Examples of Jesus Eating With Others

Disciples:	Mark 14:12-26
Friends:	John 12:1-11
Pharisees:	Luke 11:37-44
Zacchaeus:	Luke 19:1-10
Sinners/Tax Collectors:	Matthew 9:9-13
After Resurrection:	Luke 24:36-49 & John 21

We can follow the example that Jesus set for us by sharing meals with people who need to be seen, known and loved.

Describe the last time you got together with someone you didn't know well for a meal.

Why and How We Show Hospitality

1 Peter 2:10 *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Revelation 3:20 *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.*

We have been given a seat at the table by God's mercy and grace. Jesus makes room for us and we are to make room for others.

We are challenging every person who hears this message to join together with at least one other person to share a meal, get to know them a little better and pray together. It's literally that simple.

1 Peter 4:9 says, “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” This summer we are committing to do just that. Whether you are here in Southern California or somewhere else in the world, this challenge is for you. Our goal is to have people share meals around 1000 Tables between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

> TAKE AWAY

The good news of Jesus is not just for Christians; it's for all people, in all places, at all times. The church is anointed by the Spirit to be a faithful witness to the good news in all of life, so that all people would taste and see that the Lord is good.

This great commission requires a posture of hospitality and welcome, of stability and courage. By making room for people and forming deep friendships, the Holy Spirit works through us to present Christ more tangibly to the other.

Who needs a seat at your table?

When will you invite them?

Take some time to pray together, asking God to help you show hospitality as you meet together.

While you are at the table, snap a picture and send it to us at communications@hillsidechurches.com and we will add it to our photo wall.