

Prayer

A final prayer for the church at the end of this series, a Franciscan blessing:

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may wish for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.



Deeper Dive: Bear With One Another

These resources are to help you go deeper as we explore together how we are called to be with one another as the people of God. There's lots of thoughts, ideas and resources here so use whatever is helpful and may you be blessed as you go deeper in your relationship with Jesus and one another. You might find them useful to study alone, or want to study them with others – in discipleship groups, families, couples or with a friend.



Going Deeper: Scripture

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” 2 Corinthians 5:17. The Bible is a beautiful text, a prophetic and realistic Word of God, holding together the past, present and future. These words declare the wonderful truth about giving your life to Jesus, you are being made new, transformed in your inner being, eternal life has begun. But the Bible is also full of passages that remind us that we are not yet the finished article. We are still learning, growing, making mistakes, seeking forgiveness, trying to live faithfully. We are still human.

This is where the call to bear with one another in love becomes critical. I wonder if you have ever felt disappointed with the church not being perfect. I wonder if you have ever been hurt or let down by other Christians and felt the pain so much more sharply because surely Christians shouldn't behave like that?! Nadia Bolz-Weber, a pastor in America leading a

church called 'House for All Saints and Sinners' meets with all who are new to making a commitment to her church and asks them what they will do when she messes up, says something stupid, hurts or disappoints them. Note it is when, not if. She asks this because she wants to know if they will bear with her, work it out, seek to reconcile, or if they will walk away.

Humility has felt like a key theme through all of our weeks in this series and that is where we land too. As we bear with one another in love, this requires us to be humble, to know that we ourselves are in need of others bearing with us too. This doesn't mean at all that we have no value, in fact, Christian humility means seeing ourselves and others rightly through God's eyes, as equal children of the Father. Ephesians 4:2 says "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

As we go deeper with Scripture this week, I invite you to take that single verse and bring it to the Lord in prayer. You might want to go back through the other weeks as the Lord stirs you and perhaps look through some of the passages you haven't focused on so far.

Going Deeper: Reflection or Discussion and Prayer



- Am I humble? Do I commit to seeing myself and others as the Lord sees us and living out relationships from that place?
- When things get tough and I am hurt or irritated or let down, am I willing to bear with my siblings in Christ?

weeks in this series have I found the most challenging? Why?

What has the Lord said to me personally and to our church community through this series?

Deeper: More Resources

Each of us learns differently so here are a variety of resources that you might want to use to help you encounter God's love more deeply, grow in your love of God and yourself and enrich your commitment to love your neighbour.

Music

'O Church Arise' by Keith and Kristyn Getty

'If we are the body' by Casting Crowns

Books

'The Inner Voice of Love' by Henri Nouwen



This book is a series of journal entries and reflections Henri Nouwen wrote in his journey of recovery after a breakdown and the short passages speak so much truth to our souls and journeys too. A particularly profound one as we come to end this journey is 'Trust in the Place of Unity'

Podcasts *(the links are from apple because that is where I listen to my podcasts! Apologies if you use a different provider but you should be able to search for them.)*

Emmaus Rd, Rooted in Church

BibleProject One Family Once More- Family of God