

Long-Distance Love for One Another

Lessons from Paul on Loving Your Church When You Can't Be Together

Philippians 1:1-11

Remember your Christ-enabled _____ with one another. (1-2)

^[1] Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

^[2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Give Christ-centered _____ for one another. (3-5)

^[3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ^[4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ^[5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Show Christ-like _____ to one another. (6)

^[6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Cultivate Christ-like _____ for one another. (7-8)

^[7] It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ^[8] For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Offer Christ-exalting _____ for one another. (9-11)

^[9] And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ^[10] so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ^[11] filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (ESV)

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April 19, 2020

Personal Reflection: How does affirmation by others encourage you to become a better person?

Group/Family Discussion: Share something you appreciate about each person present.

Read: Philippians 1:1-11

1. In verse 1, Paul calls himself a “servant” (literally “slave”) of Christ and addresses these believers as “saints” (meaning “those who are set apart”) in Christ. What implications does each title have for those who follow Christ? How have you seen these implications reflected in your life?
2. From verses 3-8, how would you describe Paul’s feelings toward the Philippians? Based on what you see in Scripture, what factors may have led to Paul feeling this way? Paul says he feels this way for “all” the believers (v. 7), though some were clearly in need of correction (as in 4:2). What does this tell us about what it means to have Christ-like affections for all other believers?
3. Verse 6 voices confidence that God will complete the work He started in us. Why is important to remember this for *ourselves*? Why is it important to remember this for *others*? Why is it easier to desire that others remember we’re a work in progress than it is to remember the same for them?
4. Paul speaks of being in partnership with these believers (vv. 5, 7). What makes them partners—though it was over a distance? What role did their partnership have in Paul’s writing of this letter to the Philippians? Which of your relationships could you describe as Christian partnerships?
5. What is Paul’s actual prayer request for the Philippians (vv. 9-11)? What does Paul want to have happen as a result of God answering this request? What might our family, small group, or church community look like if we regularly prayed such a prayer for each other?

Apply: If we don’t have the sort of Christ-like affections for other believers that Paul has, what lessons could we learn from his example that might help us develop such affections?

What’s one way you could cultivate or demonstrate love to other believers during this time?

What might be some good long-term practices that you could develop to ensure that your love and affections for other believers grows and pleases God?

Pray: Pray that we would grow in our affection for each other (in our family, in our small group, and in our church as a whole). Pray that God would give us insight to know how to express this love in ways that affirm each other and that honor God.

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(ESV)