



Shelby Christian Church

FOLLOWING JESUS: CARING FOR EACH OTHER

ACTS 2:46, JOHN 13:31-35, * 5/03/2026

MAIN POINT

The call to follow Jesus is a call to an authentic demonstration of love for other people.

INTRODUCTION

Every person manages a wide range of relationships—our relationship with Christ, with ourselves, with the church, with unbelievers, and even with things like our attitude, priorities, and time. Of all these areas, which relationship do you find yourself investing in the most, and why?

Regardless of where we tend to focus our time, our relationship with God is meant to come first. When that relationship is healthy and growing, it reshapes every other relationship in our lives. God's presence and guidance influence how we treat people, how we think, and how we use our time.

We've learned that disciples of Jesus are called to give up certain things, to gather with other believers, and to greet one another in a way that goes far deeper than a quick "hello" or a handshake. A genuine relationship with the Lord transforms how we relate to others. It fills our interactions with a kind of love the world cannot imitate or explain.

UNDERSTANDING

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 2:46

What does "day by day" suggest about their commitment to community?

Why do you think they met both in the temple and in their homes?

What is the significance of "breaking bread" in this context?

How would you define "glad and sincere hearts" in practical terms?

What does this verse teach about the relationship between worship and fellowship?

True community is not just fellowship for the sake of gathering together; rather, we come together in body and in spirit to grow together in Christ. These early Christians saw each other as a close family, bonded together by a saving relationship with Christ. The love and sincerity Luke described led to worship and gospel mission.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ JOHN 13:31-35

Does it surprise you that Jesus commanded us to love? Why or why not?

Why is living in community with other believers essential if we want to grow in Christlike love? And what exactly is “new” about Jesus’ command to love one another?

The instruction to love our neighbors wasn’t new—God had already given that command in Leviticus 19:18. By the time Jesus spoke the words in John 13:34–35, He had already identified love for God and love for neighbor as the greatest commandments (Matthew 22:34–40). He had even taught His followers to love their enemies (Matthew 5:43–48). So what made this command “new”? The answer is found in His words: “Just as I have loved you.”

What did Jesus mean when He told His disciples to love one another the way He loved them? How does this kind of love differ from the world’s understanding of love?

Jesus’ own example is what makes the command new. His love was demonstrated through sacrifice—ultimately shown in His death on the cross, where He redeemed us from sin and gave us eternal life. Because we follow Him, our love must also be expressed through action. Humble, sacrificial service becomes a powerful testimony to the world that we belong to Jesus and that life with Him is good. Through our visible expressions of love, unbelievers should be able to see the love of an invisible God.

What is the connection between your relationship with God and your relationships with others? What qualities of God’s love should shape every relationship in your life? Why is love central to all Christian relationships? Do your relationships draw you closer to Jesus or pull you away—and how are you contributing to that direction?

Jesus could have chosen any marker to identify His true followers—evangelistic passion, powerful worship, or active ministry. Instead, He chose love for one another. Biblical community is the distinguishing sign of genuine discipleship because loving relationships reveal Christ’s transforming work in our lives.

APPLICATION

How consistent are you in gathering with other believers?

What would it look like for you to pursue more regular (even daily) connection with others in your faith community?

How can your home become a place of fellowship or ministry?

What keeps you from experiencing deeper joy and sincerity in community?

Why must the kind of love Jesus demonstrated be fundamental in our group? What would community look like if it’s not?

What things could we do to make our group more caring and loving?

What needs to change about the way you love others so that you might be a better witness for Christ?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Acts 2:46

Although these believers understood Jesus to be the fulfillment of the Jewish hope for the Messiah (2:36), the members of the Jerusalem church were primarily Jewish in background. They still went to the temple complex. They would not participate in the sacrificial system any longer, since Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for their sins. They may have wanted to demonstrate the continuity between their Jewish heritage and their new faith in Christ. Also, they may have found opportunities to witness to their Jewish friends and relatives.

Besides gathering together in the temple complex, these Christians broke bread from house to house. Quite likely this means they gathered regularly in houses for worship and the Lord's Supper. Christians did not typically build church buildings in the early centuries, so they met in homes. When they gathered in homes, these disciples expressed gratitude for their shared meals. These gatherings were marked by a simplicity or "sincerity" of heart. They did not need to put on airs; they genuinely worshiped God.

John 13:31-35

13:31-33. Once Judas had left, his evil presence removed from the room, the Lord could speak to the remaining eleven about his glorification. The horror of Roman execution glorified the Son of God and glorified the Father. Having been glorified, the Father glorified the Son with resurrection and ascension. That is why Jesus could pray in chapter 17, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you" (17:1).

Once again the Lord identified himself as the Son of Man. The phrase appears twelve times in John's Gospel and this is the last (1:51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23,34; 13:31).

The words where I am going, you cannot come offer the only saying in John that appears three times with the same wording (7:33; 8:21). Imagine the confusion of the disciples at this point. They did not have the luxury of knowing the opening verses of chapter 14. They could only ponder what the Lord meant until he continued his teaching with further explanation.

13:34-35 Love must be the distinguishing mark of Jesus' disciples. Jesus' new command closely resembled the Mosaic commands to love the Lord (Dt 6:5) and one's neighbor as oneself (Lk 19:18; cp. Mk 12:28-33). Elsewhere Jesus said we must love even our enemies (Mt 5:43-48). While the command to love God and one's neighbor was thus not new, Jesus' example (as I have loved you) was unparalleled, as was His insistence that we should love our enemies.