

Worksheet

LIFE Groups - One Anothering

One anothering is an integral part of discipleship at King's. Caring for the needs of the entire group by the leaders is not only unmanageable but also unbiblical. This is often referred to as 'one-man' ministry and is not sustainable or a desirable way to lead.

The model in the New Testament is of an interdependent community. At King's we want to model this in that LIFE Group Leaders do not have the responsibility of caring for every individual member of the LIFE Group directly but look to train and release the members of the LIFE Group to care for one another. Hence the term 'One Anothering'.

The following are LGL training notes from Elliott Corke, 30 April 2023. This is a great teaching resource for you and one you could use with your groups to use as a one-off worksheet from time to time. At the end there are questions you could discuss in your groups and also a list of One anothers; one sheet completed with biblical references the second with blanks so people could fill them in.

Depending on how literal you are with phrasing and repetition, there are something like 50-90 examples of "one-anothering" in the New Testament, the majority of which are in Paul's letters, with a few attributed directly to Jesus in the gospels.

Jesus's examples

In the last days and hours before his death, Jesus prepared his disciples for a time when he would no longer be physically with them. Throughout his time with them he became the centre of their lives and he knew how important it would be for them to look after each other once he had gone.

In John 13 he leaves us with two beautiful examples of how he expected his disciples to behave towards another.

His first example, during the last supper, was the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-11). This caused some consternation from Peter who did not feel it was his place to have his feet washed by Jesus. Afterwards, Jesus explained his actions:

¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. (John 13:12-17)

Jesus explains the importance of having a servant heart and of being prepared to put others' needs before their own. His actions also point towards what he is about to do to cleanse them from sin.

When they are reclining after the meal, we see another example of one-anothering given by Jesus.

³³ "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:33-35)

He tells them no less than three times to love one another. Of the several Greek words for love, the one used here is *agapaō*. This is the same word used in John 3:16 "for God so loved the world" and in Matthew 22:37 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Effectively, Jesus is telling them us express the same unconditional love for each other that God has for humanity, that he had for his disciples and that all Christians should have for God. He reinforces that the love the disciples show for each other will be a key differentiator of a Christian community, it will be recognisable by everybody.

The word for command is the same as that used to refer in the new testament to the old testament commandments, so Jesus is effectively putting this on the same level of importance.

As an aside, don't miss the start of verse 33; the word *Teknia*, translated as "My children" or sometimes "little children" is, a very affectionate term. Despite Jesus knowing that Judas has already gone out to betray him and the fact that he knows Peter will deny him three times that night, Jesus uses a term that is a genuine term of affection between a teacher and their disciples and could also be applied to a father with a group of his children. It is easy to skip over but shows the depth of his love for us.

For completeness, there is one more reference to Jesus in terms of one-anothering, which is in Mark 9:50: "be at peace with each other".

The rest of the one-anothering references

The majority of the remaining one-anothering phrases are in Paul's letters to the various churches. At the end of this document is a page of examples and you can find other lists online. There is also a fill the gaps sheet if you want to carry out an exercise with your group to consider the topic more deeply.

From our discussions as LIFE group leaders, it is clear that at King's we are good at one-anothering, but there will always be some that are more challenging than others. If you read any that are difficult it is always worth reading around the context of the statement. I'll give one example later.

Church pastor Andy Stanley said "when everyone is sitting in rows... you can't do any one anothers". In his blog, Andrew Mason expanded on this, saying "If the majority of the church's focus is herding people into rows we will not have an abundance of opportunities to "be the church". When we're intentional about guiding the church towards Biblical community we create more space for the one anothers. It's so much easier to do one-anothering in circles than rows."

As a result, LIFE group is an ideal situation to practise one-anothering. True one-anothering requires a high degree of trust and relationship to ensure that it comes out of the love for one-another that Jesus gave as his most important example.

What is a Holy Kiss?

There are several references to a holy kiss in the new testament. This was used as a sign of peace and also unity, as well as showing equality within the church. As we see in the new testament, there was a tendency at times for Christians from a Jewish background to “rank” themselves higher than gentile Christians. The holy kiss was a way of demonstrating that all believers are equal in the family of God. These days a hug or handshake is more culturally commonplace. The context is a genuine greeting given in love and equality. One commentator said “Whether or not our salutations to our brothers and sisters in Christ include the holy kiss, the important thing is that our greetings spring from real love and friendship, be characterized by sincerity, and represent true Christian fellowship.”

There is a useful interview (audio and transcript) with John Piper on the subject here:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/the-holy-kiss-relevant-today-or-not>

The importance of context

One that was discussed as being particularly challenging is Colossians 3:16, “teach and admonish one another”. Admonishment can seem a harsh term. The full context of that section is “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

So, teaching and admonishment is with wisdom and in worship in the rich context of the message of Christ and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It points back to other examples that Jesus gave of how careful we need to be about seeing fault in others.

Of course, if you feel you need support with a particular issue I would always encourage you to speak to your LIFE group overseers or the pastoral team. Members of King’s have a huge amount of experience dealing with different issues so never feel you have to deal with anything alone.

Some questions you could work through with your LIFE group

- 1) Which of the “one anothers” do you feel that we do really well as a LIFE group?
- 2) Which “one anothers” are more challenging?
- 3) How can we develop a LIFE group culture that fosters the more challenging “one anothers”? (Considerations could include: trust, openness, leading by example, knowing each other well enough to know what is appropriate to share, etc.)

One Anothering

- Be *devoted* to one another in brotherly love. Romans 12:10
- *Prefer* one another above yourselves Romans. 12:10
- *Live in harmony* with one another. Romans 12:16
- *Love* one another. Romans 13:8
- Stop *passing judgement* on one another. Romans 14:13
- *Accept* one another. Romans 15:7
- *Instruct* one another. Romans 15:14
- *Greet* one another with a *holy kiss* Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12
- *Agree* with one another. 1 Corinthians 1:10
- *Serve* one another in love. Galatians 5:13
- be patient , *bearing* with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2
- Be *kind* and *compassionate* to one another, *forgiving* each other. Ephesians 4:32
- *Speak* to one another with *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs* Ephesians 5:19
- *Submit* to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21
- *Bear* with one another and *forgive* one another. Colossians 3:13
- *Teach* and *admonish* one another. Colossians 3:16
- *Encourage* one another and *build* each other up. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

(all references are from NIV)

One Anothering

- Be *devoted* to one another in brotherly love. Romans 12:10
- _____ one another above yourselves Romans. 12:10
- _____ in _____ with one another. Romans 12:16
- _____ one another. Romans 13:8
- Stop _____ on one another. Romans 14:13
- _____ one another. Romans 15:7
- _____ one another. Romans 15:14
- _____ one another with a _____. Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12
- _____ with one another. 1 Corinthians 1:10
- _____ one another in love. Galatians 5:13
- be patient , _____ with one another in love. Ephesians 4:2
- Be _____ and _____ to one another, _____ each other. Ephesians 4:32
- _____ to one another with _____, _____ and _____ . Ephesians 5:19
- _____ to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5:21
- _____ with one another and _____ one another. Colossians 3:13
- _____ and _____ one another. Colossians 3:16
- _____ one another and _____ each other up. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

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