

Week Beginning: 10th November 2019

Worship Series: #2 in series: **Shhh.**

WE DON'T  
TALK ABOUT...

living sharing growing

### Theme Verse

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 4:6-8a

### Remember This Week

God cares about what has happened to you and is happening to you now. If you are being abused, we believe you. Jesus invites you to find comfort in his arms. If you are the abuser, know that this behaviour is unacceptable. Always. No asterisks. Jesus invites you to find forgiveness in him through repentance. For the home is a reflection of God's image, designed to be a sanctuary and safe place, characterized by tender strength, courageous protection, self-giving devotion, compassionate mercy, gentle nurture and unfailing love. May it be so in your home.



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly



**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. - 1 John 4:7-11**

Loving Heavenly Father, as we gather around your word, may we come to better understand your love for us. By your Holy Spirit, empower us to show greater love to each other and all those that you bring into our lives, In Jesus name, Amen

1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Apart from Jesus, who is the most loving person you know?*
4. *What would happen on your perfect/dream date?*
5. *How aware of domestic violence have you been in the lives of those around you?*

Domestic or Family Violence is hidden behind many closed doors, in places that should be a sanctuary. The statistics are frightening, it's impact devastating. A survey of domestic violence in Australia shows that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced at least one incident of violence from a current or former partner since the age of 15. One woman is killed every week as a result of violence in the home. Police respond to a domestic violence incident every 2 minutes. It's not a problem that we can ignore, be ignorant of, or silent about especially in the Church. God created the church to continue his work on earth and to be the vehicle for bringing his love and life to the world. He gave his Word, not be used as a weapon against those who suffer or as a means to control, but so it could be a shield for everyone in need of refuge and strength.

Read Ephesians 5:8-21

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *What does the word 'submit' mean to you?*
8. *What do you think 'speak to each other with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' means?*

In this passage, Paul reminds us that we all lived in darkness before we encountered the light of Christ. We all have a tendency to go back to the darkness at certain points in our lives, particularly when everything around us seems so dark. One of the ways the darkness



manifests itself is in selfishness. We refuse to allow the needs of others to interfere with our own agenda. And sometimes, when the world around us is only focussed on taking care of itself, we feel forced to look out for ourselves. Yet this only adds to the darkness. Jesus calls us out of darkness and asks us to be salt and light in the world. (Matt 5:13-16)

9. *When we become aware of domestic violence or abuse we have two choices, we can feel uncomfortable and fail to offer love and support, or we can be a light in a very dark place. What might it look like to shine the light of Jesus in this kind of situation?*

10. *Ephesians 5:17 warns us not to be foolish but to understand what the Lord's will is. How would you discern what would be godly advice in a situation like this?*

In a situation involving such complexity, there may not be one correct answer, or one right approach for every case. It is important though that we have these kinds of conversations and have thought through some of the options. While we are called to be salt and light we are not going to be experts in every situation. We may need help ourselves. If you or your LifeGroup would like more information on responding to domestic and family violence, a good place to start might be the Lutheran Church of Australia's 'Domestic Violence Handbook for Pastoral Workers' available at <http://www.preventdfv.lca.org.au/resources-training>. What scripture is clear about is that whatever situation we find ourselves in we are to respond with love.

Read Colossians 3:12-17 and John 13:34-35

11. *Colossians 3 suggests that part of the love and unity of the body of Christ is to teach and admonish one another, but to do so in love. How do we respond in love when a situation such as domestic violence can stir up such fierce responses in us?*
12. *Sometimes people find it difficult to leave a domestic violence situation because they do actually still love their abusive partner. To leave can seem like an unloving thing to do. In what scenarios can leaving an abusive partner be the most loving thing to do?*
13. *Perhaps the hardest part of all this is that we are called to respond in love not just to victims but also to those who commit domestic and family violence. How do we do this while ensuring the safety and security of others?*

There are no simple answers to a problem like domestic violence. It is a particularly nasty expression of the sinful nature that corrupts the image of God in each of us. God's answer was love; deep, enduring, self-sacrificing love demonstrated in his son, Jesus Christ.



Our ability to respond with love in these kinds of situations is dependent on how well we know and trust the love of God for us. We can be frozen by the fear of getting things wrong or making things worse or we can know that God loves us and loves those who are suffering at the hands of others. We can know that God calls us to love them and will empower us to do the things he has asked us to do. Let's make our church a place where people can confidently come and share their brokenness, knowing they will be heard, believed, and received with love and kindness.

14. *How will you grow in your understanding of God's love for you this week?*
15. *What are some ways you will practice showing the love of God to others this week?*
16. *Look for an opportunity to hear another person's story this week. Just practice listening. See if you can hear where they need to experience the love of Jesus in their life.*

\* *If anything in this LifeGroup guide or this sermon series has brought up issues for you personally, please feel free to contact Pastor Mark or Pastor Mat or alternatively call Lifeline on 13 11 14.*

- \* Praise God for his steadfast and consistent love that protects and keeps you. Thank Jesus for his offer of freedom which he won for you on the cross. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to live as salt and light in the world.
- \* Pray for those who are caught in domestic violence. Ask God to protect them and free them from their situation. Ask him to bring his healing to their lives.
- \* Pray for each other - for hearts of love that might put the needs of others before ourselves. For the courage to live lives that shine the light of Jesus in a dark world.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

*Name, the Lord is your rock and safe place. Amen.*

