

# Covenant Season Discussion Guide

*By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.*

John 13:35

*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.*

Rom. 12:10

**Devoted** - (greek definition): the mutual love of parents and children and wives and husbands, loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly, chiefly of the reciprocal tenderness of parents and children.

- *If the Greek definition of "devoted" describes spiritual family, what truths transfer to our love for one another?*

We believe our lives as followers of Jesus are rooted in a covenantal story, a story of redemptive relationships in which God has radically, willfully, and sacrificially chosen and adopted us. He has called us his own.

- *What do biblical themes of covenant, adoption, and redemptive relationships mean to you in your current life stage?*

God has made a covenant with us through faith in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of his son, Jesus. From the nature of this covenant, we, the Gathering Network, choose to live in covenant with one another. God does not wish that we live alone but manifest the beauty of the Kingdom of God in redemptive relationships based on submission, unconditional love, sacrifice, and fidelity.

- *How does relational commitment change the way you live?*
- *What relationships in your life currently require submission, unconditional love, sacrifice, and fidelity?*
- *In what ways have you learned to stay committed to relationships when submission, unconditional love, sacrifice, and fidelity prove difficult?*

Our covenant is a promise — a promise made to God and to one another as a spiritual family and local church. It is also a promise we make to ourselves.

- *What are the benefits of promises kept?*
- *What are the pitfalls of promises broken?*

## **We commit to live a life of love lived in three directions:**

*Our values and practices articulate how we, as a local church body, will practically pursue life together as apprentices of Jesus.*

*We know values don't always become habits. We also know the stories we believe drive our behaviors.*

*It's essential for us to hold together a simple way of life that aligns with our core values and beliefs so that they can become core behaviors as we are transformed in Christ.*

*Each of our values is written to express a transformation from awareness (belief) to ownership (through practice).*

### **To LOVE GOD (UP)**

**We value** nurturing a real relationship with God because **we believe** Jesus promised we could be filled with *his Spirit*. Therefore, **we practice** a simple "rule of life" that helps us plug into this reality daily.

### **To LOVE EACH OTHER (IN)**

**We value** the work of being shaped by Jesus through transformational discipleship. **We believe** Jesus' way of spiritual formation was measured by his disciples' character *transformation*, which happens best in bonded relationships built around his presence, his way, and his Word. Therefore, **we practice** making disciples in spiritual families, or "house churches," so the next generation can fully live in Christ.

### **To LOVE THE WORLD (OUT)**

**We value** Jesus' mission to remake the world - he is making all things new. **We believe** the gospel is *relational*. Jesus gave his life to restore our secure attachment with God, and he has called us as his followers to share this good news, sent as co-missionaries and ministers with him, wherever we may be. Therefore, **we practice** living as missionaries and ministers where we live, work, and play - even to the ends of the earth.

This is the covenant we make to God, to ourselves, and to each another.

- *If you could grow **from value to practice** in any of these areas (UP, IN, or OUT) with passion and perseverance this year, which area would you choose, and why?*
- *In what ways might covenant partnership with your missional community and the Gathering Network help you grow in that area?*

**What is God saying about your need for covenant relationships for this year?**

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