

## **Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 3**

### **Why is the Mandate to Love One Another New?**

The commandment to love is not new to the disciples. The summary of the Law is to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves (Matt 22: 37-40). What is new in Jesus' mandate for us to love one another is that we are to love one another 'just as I (Jesus) have loved you' (34). In other words, we are to love fellow believers the way Jesus loves; full of grace, patience, compassion and always forgiving.

The disciples to whom this mandate was first given were not selfless, considerate people but imperfect with a lot of shortcomings. On the way to Jerusalem, the disciples were fighting amongst themselves as to who was the greatest and should be ranked above the rest (Luke 22:24). Before long, when their Master was arrested, they would all respond in cowardly manner.

However, Jesus expects His disciples and those who follow Him to have a high standard of love for one another. We are to love each other in spite of the other's faults and imperfections. Jesus emphasizes that the distinguishing mark of a believer is his / her love for others in the body of Christ.

How we relate to others in the church community will either draw unbelievers to church or drive them away. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pastor and theologian, who was martyred for his stand against the Nazis, said this of the Church, "What matters in the Church is not religion but the form of Christ, and how Christ is visibly seen amongst its members."

### **Read John 13: 34-35**

#### *Questions to ponder*

1. What did Jesus ask His disciples to do? Why (34-35)? How is love a sign that someone is a true believer?
2. Give two examples of Jesus' love for His disciples in the three years they were with Him. Share three instances when you yourself have experienced Jesus' love.
3. What does it mean for you to love fellow believers the way Jesus loves? What can you do for someone in the church who needs to know the love of Jesus at this moment?

Prepared by Rosalind Chen