

DEEP LOVE

Life Group Leaders Guide

Directions

This packet contains the background information, series information, and weekly curriculum you will need to lead a life group during our *Deep Love* series. Everything on this page is to help you stay connected to the series as a whole. Behind this page is the individual curriculum to help you point people to Jesus. The *Purpose* and *Move* sections of the curriculum are for the leader to read or paraphrase to the group. The *Notes and Commentary* section is for the leader to get background information and go deeper into the passages before leading the life group. The curriculum was designed with your freedom in mind. Read through the curriculum and decide what will work best for your group. SOAP the passages with the group, use only certain questions, write your own questions, or use the curriculum verbatim. As the leader, you know what will point your people to Jesus.

Series Overview

During our *Deep Love* series we will be turning our intention inward to focus on the specific things God has for His followers as a collective group. Most of the New Testament writings and sayings of Jesus are plural and intended for a group of Christians to act on together. In other words, Jesus and His word put a lot of emphasis on followers living out the truths of the bible as a group, not just individually. Sadly, many Christians and churches barely scratch the surface of the gift from God that is community. What we will see in this series is that showing up on Sunday for service only is not what God has in mind for his followers. Instead, he wants people that love each other deeply, forgive always, are marked by hospitality, and serve endlessly. We hope this series will be a way for you to dive deeper into the community God has placed around you.

Life Group Overview

During the *Deep Love* series our life group curriculum will cover the same topic that was covered from stage but using a different passage or set of passages. Each curriculum will begin with an unpacking of the previous Sunday's service to help the leader open up the topic for the study and also see how people responded to the Sunday teaching.

Deep Love Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic of sermon	Topic of life group
Week 1	9/17	Priority	Matthew 18:21-35
Week 2	9/24	Hospitality	Genesis 18:1-8
Week 3	10/1	Service	John 13:1-20

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Deep Love - Week 2 - Genesis 18:1-8

Purpose of Study

Tonight's study explores how *Deep Love* is expressed through hospitality. To live into this expression of *Deep Love*, we should be flexible, we should have a sense of urgency, we should put ourselves in the role of servant, and we should go above and beyond our visitor's expectations. In doing so, we are Jesus's hands and feet, inviting many souls to his Kingdom and building deeper relationships.

Flow of Study

Optional Icebreaker: Describe a time when someone showed up at your home unannounced. Did this bother you? How did you respond?

Move #1: Since the sermon series and life groups are covering the same topics, it might be a good idea (both for content and time) to begin the discussion with some unpacking questions from this Sunday's sermon.

1. Did anything stand out to you from the sermon this weekend?
2. What is one thing from the sermon that you want to apply this week?
3. Why is an understanding of hospitality necessary for the believer and how does this an expression of *Deep Love*?
4. How was hospitality practiced in your home growing up? How do you practice hospitality now? Do you think upbringing influences someone's view of hospitality?
5. Are you comfortable inviting people to your house? How often do you have people over? How many of your immediate neighbors have physically been inside your home?
6. Different cultures have different expectations regarding hospitality. Do you think our culture's expectations for hospitality are too low?
7. Have you experienced hospitality from someone of a different culture than you? Was there anything that impressed you about their hospitality? Is there anything stopping you from imitating it?

Move #2: In our passage tonight, we will explore a story from Genesis where Abraham demonstrates hospitality to a handful of strangers that show up unannounced. This passage is not necessarily a direct teaching *about* hospitality, rather it is a subtle example of generous hospitality in practice. As you read, consider the deep love Abraham shows to his guests through hospitality and consider the ways we can do likewise.

Read Genesis 18:1-8 (NIV)

¹ The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

³ He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it.

⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

1. What stands out to you from this passage?
2. Abraham looks up in the heat of the day and finds three visitors. They were unannounced, unexpected, and unknown to him. Was there ever a time when someone showed up at your home unannounced. Did this bother you? How did you respond? How was your response different from Abraham's?
 - a. **Note to Leader:** The first part of this question is a repeat of the icebreaker. If your group already answered this question, move directly to comparing the earlier responses to that of Abraham.
3. When Abraham saw the three men arrive near his home he hurried to meet them (v. 2), he hurried back to the tent to notify his wife (v. 6), he ran to the herd to select an animal (v. 7), and the servant hurried to prepare it. Why do you think Abraham was in such a hurry? How does this demonstrate love in hospitality?
 - a. **Hint:** Abraham had a sense of urgency. If we let it, many opportunities to show others hospitality will pass us by because we are too slow to act or are waiting for the perfect timing that never comes. If we wait too long to show our love, strangers will walk on past, perhaps never to return.
4. Abraham refers to himself as these men's servant twice (v. 3 and v. 5) and he calls one of them his lord (v. 3). These men are strangers to him and yet he places himself in the role of their servant. When strangers visit you at home or at work, do you consider yourself their servant? Why or why not?
5. When loved ones visit, do you place yourself in the role of servant to show them hospitality? What does that look like for you?
6. When you picture the three visitors, do you imagine them dressed in finery? Do you think they are in fact lords?
7. Should Abraham's response be any different if instead of lords they were poor nomads, weary from their travels? Do you ever find yourself treating wealthy or powerful visitors different than the poor?
 - a. **Hint:** For further reading see **Hebrews 13:2**.
8. Read this commentary from Walton: *The bowing, foot-washing, and offer of refreshment in the shade and a meal are all standard aspects of meticulous hospitality. Protocol required that the meal served to*

the guest exceed what was first offered. Thus, Abraham simply offers a meal, but what he orders prepared is freshly baked bread, a calf, and a mixture of milk and yogurt. The three seahs of flour (ca. twenty quarts) used to make bread again reflects Abraham's generosity to his guests, but what is particularly generous here is the fresh meat, an item not normally found in their daily diet.

9. Have you ever gone above and beyond like Abraham did to make someone feel welcome? Has anyone ever done this for you? What was the outcome?
10. How does lavishing your guests with generous hospitality deepen the relationship? How is it an expression of deep love?

Move #3: In this short story, Abraham demonstrated many of the principles of generous hospitality (seen bulleted below). This final move explores how to put these principles into practice as individuals, as a lifegroup, and as a church.

- He was flexible by hosting the men even though they showed up unannounced. This is so important for us as Jesus's disciples because we never know when or how or who will show up in our lives, but we should be willing and open to showing them Christ's love through hospitality, even when it's inconvenient for us.
- He treated the situation with a sense of urgency. No one knows how long their lives will intersect with others. We shouldn't put off hospitality for some future time. We should invite others and be generous now, while we have the chance.
- He embraced the role of servanthood. As we will see next week, when we take on the role of servant, we are following in Christ's loving example.
- He went above and beyond his guest's expectations. If non-Christians are to know Christians by our love (**John 13:35**), we ought to aim for extraordinary generosity, loving extravagantly.

1. What is something that stood out to you tonight that you are going to take with you?
2. So far, we have explored hospitality on a personal level, i.e. how we as individuals show hospitality to guests at our home or place of work. What about within our life group? What ways can we go above and beyond to welcome new people to our lifegroup?
3. How can we express the deep love we share through hospitality within our life group? If the lifegroup is hosted in someone's home, specifically ask that person if they would like to share some of their experiences as a host.
 - a. **Note to leader:** Be sure to thank your hosts each time you gather and tonight especially, lift up thanks during prayer time for your hosts.
4. How did you feel when you first visited our church? Did we do a good job of being hospitable? Did you feel welcome?
5. What can we do as members of the church to show the deep love of Christ to the strangers who show up at our door every single Sunday?
 - a. **Hint:** Before and after the service seek out people you don't already know, introduce yourself, ask them how long they've been coming, and see if there are any questions they might have that you can answer, consider inviting them to lifegroup, especially if they have already come to church a few times.

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther. **Note to Leader:** Share these next steps with your communications person. Add them to the weekly lifegroup email.

1. For further reading, consider meditating this week on another story of radical hospitality: **Matthew 25:31-46**. This story teaches that when we generously love those in need by showing them hospitality we are loving Christ and when we withhold our love and hospitality from those in need we withhold it from Christ Himself.
2. Consider joining the Frontline team, which is the hospitality ministry of the Point Church on Sunday mornings. There are numerous positions including greeting, cafe, ushering, set up and tear down, and more. The goal of this team is to point people to Jesus by creating a welcoming environment, personal connections, and reaching out to new visitors. Add this to your connect card on Sunday.
3. As a lifegroup, consider intentionally practicing hospitality with one another over the next few weeks. Consider splitting up into groups of three to five and setting a date and time to meet together over a meal in each other's homes. Meeting together from time to time in smaller groups outside of lifegroup is a great chance to deepen the bonds of brotherly and sisterly love and to practice hospitality.

Prayer: End your study with a time of prayer where people can share prayer requests and be prayed for before they leave. If possible, please steer some prayer towards what your group talked about during this study.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

- Abraham was waiting to entertain any weary traveller, for inns were not to be met with as among us. While Abraham was thus sitting, he saw three men coming. These were three heavenly beings in human bodies. Some think they were all created angels; others, that one of them was the Son of God, the Angel of the covenant. Washing the feet is customary in those hot climates, where only sandals are worn. We should not be forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares, [Hebrews 13:2](#); nay, the Lord of angels himself; as we always do, when for his sake we entertain the least of his brethren. Cheerful and obliging manners in showing kindness, are great ornaments to piety. Though our condescending Lord vouchsafes not personal visits to us, yet still by his Spirit he stands at the door and knocks; when we are inclined to open, he deigns to enter; and by his gracious consolations he provides a rich feast, of which we partake with him, [Revelation 3:20](#). (Henry)