



Worship at home'

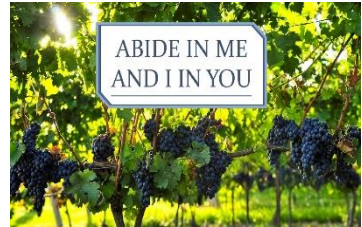
May 5th 2024



In this season after Easter,
we continue to reflect on our experience of
the risen Christ in our lives.

Opening

Jesus invites us to abide in him;
a call to remain in his love.
In him we find abundant life;
joy, and strength for our journey.
So then, we are to show love to others;
**to bear the fruit of his
generous love for us.**



This scripture passage tells of one of Jesus' last conversations with his disciples, as they gathered for a meal before his betrayal and arrest. He reminds them to remain connected to God as the source of life and love, as branches are to a vine. When we live in God, we live in love.

John 15:9-17

*"As the Father has loved me,
so have I loved you. Now
remain in my love. If you keep
my commands, you will
remain in my love, just as I
have kept my Father's
commands and remain in his
love. I have told you this so
that my joy may be in you and
that your joy may be
complete. My command is
this: Love each other as I
have loved you. Greater love
has no one than this: to lay
down one's life for one's
friends. You are my friends if*

*you do what I command. I no
longer call you servants,
because a servant does not
know his master's business.
Instead, I have called you
friends, for everything that I
learned from my Father I have
made known to you. You did
not choose me, but I chose
you and appointed you so
that you might go and bear
fruit—fruit that will last—and
so that whatever you ask in
my name the Father will give
you. This is my command:
Love each other. NIV 1*

When we live grounded in God's love, we experience God's generous grace and abundant life. This enables us to show love to others, as we bear the fruit of God's life and love in us. We are empowered to love as Jesus Christ loved, giving of ourselves graciously and lavishly. This grows our relationship with Christ, as we come closer to him, in faith.

What might it mean for you to “remain” in God’s love?

How do you find yourself growing closer to Jesus Christ?

In what ways are you able to be generous and self-giving in your love for others?

What about this do you find difficult?



It might be helpful to see love not as a feeling but as an action. Love is what we do, and how we live. However, love can be a really difficult action to live out. Sometimes there are people we find difficult to feel affection for. Jesus calls us to love as he loved: to show love even to those people whom we have trouble liking.

Reflect on the people you have found difficult to love – perhaps those you don’t understand, those who have hurt you, those with whom you have argued or disagreed.

Ask God to help you show love to them in such a way that you could take a step toward healing and reconciliation.

*Be generous with your life –
love deeply, honestly, and without reservation.*

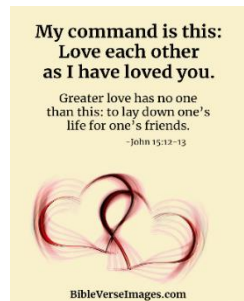
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Prayer of Confession

Jesus, friend and brother,
you taught us to abide in your generous love,
for it completes our lives and gives us joy;
you ask us to love others as you have loved us,
for it brings your creation to fruition.
We sometimes struggle to love
the people in our lives as you have loved us.
Forgive us, we pray,
and teach us your love again. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Jesus calls us friends,
and reminds us that we are loved, chosen,
and appointed to bear fruit.
In his love we find mercy and grace.
Our sins are forgiven: **Thanks be to God!**



A Reflection

Because it is the last Sunday before Ascension Day, the texts of the sixth Sunday of Easter in effect become the last words of the resurrected Jesus to his friends. Jesus, about to ascend to heaven, leaves this instruction: "Love one another as I have loved you."

As I have loved you: radical love of enemies, the poor, despised tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, lepers. Relentless challenges to the righteous and pious; truth telling, table overturning, and finally cross bearing and death embracing, and laying down your life for your friends.

It makes me want to hide under my desk.

I'd feel better if Jesus really ascended far away into heaven, remotely busying himself at the "right hand of the Father." Unfortunately, the enthronement takes place within each and every heart. Your own heart. My imperfect heart.

Loving one another as he loved us, is, indeed a most intimate commandment. And every year, I'm not sure I'm up to it.

-Suzanne <http://www.edgeofenclosure.org/easter6b.html>

Prayer of Commitment

Holy God, before time you named us through time,
you redeem us, you call us,
precious in your sight

May we love as you love



Holy One, through the turbulent waters make us steady,
your hands holding strong
the fragile and weak

May we love as you love

Gracious God, may the fruits of our lives be food for the hungry,
bread, clothing, shelter,
fire, water, Word

May we love as you love

God of justice, remove that in our lives which keeps us
from hearing,
following your call

May we love as you love

Loving God, take this day our fears, our worries,
distractions, and all
turn them into love

May we love as you love Amen ~ adapted from Prayer written by Terri:
<http://revgalblogpals.blogspot.ca/>

Pray:

- for special people in our lives who have shown generous love to us
- to be able to show radical love to others, especially those with whom we don't feel a sense of connection
- peace and love to be shown in situations of violence and conflict

Closing

Go in joy and faithfulness,
knowing that we live as friends
of Christ, we abide in Christ's
love, and we go to bear the gift
of this love to the world. Amen.

