

Sacrificial Love for the Church—
the Public Proof of Salvation
1 Peter 1:22-25

Introduction: Are you a supporter of the Church or a distraction?

1. The Desire to Practice Brotherly Love is Automatic for the Genuine Believer (verse 22a).

The necessity for a supernatural “glue” in the local church.

The source for that spiritual “glue” is hearts purified by obedient faith in the gospel.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

The supreme value of love in the church.

This is how the diversities of interests and preferences can hold together in a church.

Brotherly love is primarily an attitude in your heart.

The term for “brotherly love” tends to be used more generally in the New Testament for good attitude or a kindness of heart in relationships. It is at the heart of the real meaning of friendship.

2. The Practicing of Self-sacrificial Love in the Church must be Cultivated (verse 22b).

Jesus made *Agape* the dominant Greek word for Christian love.
John 13:34-35

The essence of *agape* love is Christlike self-sacrifice.
1 John 3:16

The standard for *agape* love is Christ.
Christ’s love was displayed in sacrifice.

This love requires us to *stretch ourselves out* beyond our own interests and concerns.

What this self-stretching self-sacrificial love looks like:

Romans 12:12-15
Colossians 3:12-14

Why can *agape* be difficult:

Because we are not all “people persons” oriented toward others.

Because of sin. We don’t like inconvenience.

Because we don’t like to be out of our “comfort zones”.

How church membership can be a gesture of *agape* love.

3. Earnest *agape* Grows out of God’s Life-Giving Word (verses 23-25).

Isaiah 40:6-8 contrasts our human mortality with the eternal nature of the life God’s word creates in us.

Peter selected this passage in order to bring encouragement to his readers who were enduring a kind of exile like the Israelites and who were and likewise suffering.

Because the word of the Lord is like imperishable seed, it generates imperishable, or eternal, life.

The abiding word of the Lord of which Isaiah spoke is the very quality of divine message proclaimed in the gospel.

Summary:

If you have the life born out of obedient faith in the gospel, it will cause you to stretch yourselves out to support the Christians in this church family.

And the teaching of God’s word will be the source that will continue to inspire our *agape* for one another.