

Living for Love

Questions for reflection and discussion

This study sheet is to accompany *Living for Love* by David R. Tomlinson, available to order from independent bookshops and direct from the publisher, Sacristy Press, at www.sacristy.co.uk (ISBN 9781789592580).

Chapter 1 God is love

Bible passage for reflection: Ephesians 3:14–21

- 1 Why do some people find it hard to believe in love?
- 2 What biblical stories seem to contradict its climactic theology that God is love?
- 3 How does a belief in God's love shape the way we live?
- 4 Who has loved you, and how has their love formed you?
- 5 Of the acts of love you have experienced, which has been most sacrificial?

Chapter 2 Loving yourself—Loving the gift that is you

Bible passage for reflection: Psalm 139:1–18

- 1 Have you learnt anything of lasting value through times of darkness?
- 2 What loving communities have helped you to become you?
- 3 Why does it make us feel vulnerable to love, and allow ourselves to be loved?
- 4 How do you nurture yourself?
- 5 In whose presence do you most feel yourself?

Chapter 3 Loving other people

Bible passage for reflection: Matthew 5:43–48

- 1 How would the world be different if love was paramount for everyone?
- 2 Why is trustworthiness so important to human relationships, the life of a community, and our national discourse?
- 3 In what ways is love costly?
- 4 What would you say matters to you most?
- 5 Who listens to you attentively, and when?

Chapter 4 Following Christ in the way of love

Bible passage for reflection: Philippians 2:1–13

- 1 What do we learn about love from the example of Jesus Christ?
- 2 Why is forgiveness so central to the life of a loving community?
- 3 Where do we see injustice and oppression locally, nationally, and internationally?
- 4 How do we weave together gratitude for our lives with our discontent with the status quo?
- 5 What does it mean to love our enemies?

Chapter 5 Loving God

Bible passage for reflection: Song of Solomon 2

- 1 What are your favourite similes for God: God is like...?
- 2 How can we express our love for God?
- 3 When, if at all, do you notice yourself resting in God?
- 4 What gifts can we give God?
- 5 Why is loving people bound up with our love for God?

Chapter 6 Loving silence

Bible passage for reflection: Psalm 131

- 1 How do we best respond to anxious thoughts?
- 2 Whose voice from the past or present is affirming for you?
- 3 What are we doing to set our hearts on God?
- 4 How can we express our solidarity with the rest of humanity?
- 5 Why is silence before God an act of faith?

Chapter 7 Forming communities of love

Bible passage for reflection: Colossians 3:12–17

- 1 How do we express our love for each other?

- 2 What would those encountering a community of love see and feel?

- 3 Why do we need patience as our communities mature in love?

- 4 What does it mean to speak and listen lovingly?

- 5 How can we help our communities to be outward looking?

David Tomlinson, December 2022