

GROUP MEDITATION ON JOHN 15:9-17

⁹"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰*If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.* ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.* ¹³Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴*You are my friends if you do what I command.* ¹⁵I 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. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷*This is my command: Love each other. (NIV)*

⁹I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [^acontinue in His love with Me]. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love. ¹¹I have told you these things, that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing. ¹²This is My commandment: that you love one another [just] as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do. ¹⁵I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.] ¹⁶You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you [I have planted you], that you might go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting [that it may remain, abide], so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name [as ^bpresenting all that I AM], He may give it to you. ¹⁷This is what I command you: that you love one another. **(Amplified)**

⁹⁻¹⁰"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love. ¹¹⁻¹⁵"I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father. ¹⁶"You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you. ¹⁷"But remember the root command: Love one another. **(The Message)**

Suggestions

Share a meal together - or coffee and cake. At the end of the meal, as you're enjoying each other's company, take time to consider the passage. It may be good to have copies of the passages for people to refer.

Firstly, set the scene –

Imagine you are all part of the original group of disciples sharing in that last supper with Jesus. What might be your feelings as you hear Jesus speak these words to you? Consider the atmosphere amongst the disciples – relaxed; fearful; tense; peaceful? (Remember, the evening started with Jesus washing the disciples' feet; Judas has already been named as a betrayer and Peter as one who will deny Jesus.)

Have three people read out the different translations, then discuss the following thoughts:

1. Jesus speaks of love and friendship arising from obedience to him. How can our relationship with Christ be free and loving when apparently dependent on our obedience to his commands?
2. In verse 10 Jesus holds up his relationship with the Father as an example to follow as we obey him. What does this show us of the nature of Christ - and how does this affect our reaction to his commands to us?
3. Jesus links his command to obey him with joy – both his and ours. How joyful and fulfilled do you feel in your relationship with Christ?
4. Jesus highlights his command to love one another. What is the nature of love that can be given on demand?
5. What are the implications of Jesus' words in this passage for our work as Mothers' Union locally, nationally and worldwide?
6. How well do you think you are fulfilling Jesus' commands both as individuals and as an organisation?

End the evening by giving thanks that Jesus' commands to us are given in love, to nurture love and to enhance our joy and fulfilment in our relationship with him.

