

These Southland Group discussion guides are intended to guide you through the biblical text(s) from the weekend sermon. As a leader, your task is not to make it through every question here, but to help your group observe from, interpret, and apply the text to their lives. We will use the 5 W's and the HEAR acronym as a framework for you.

Sermon Series: Caring Community

Sermon Title: God is Love

Sermon Date: January 4, 2026

Main Idea: As a people saved by grace, the love of our Heavenly Father lives in us.

WELCOME The goal is to get everyone talking. Approx 10 min

- *Option 1:* Share highs and lows from the week.
- *Option 2:* Ask: "If you were to interview someone on the street and ask 'How would you define *love*' what answers do you think you'd get?"

WORSHIP The goal is to humble your hearts before God. Approx 10 min

- *Option 1:* Have a group member (or you) share the gospel with the group in order to remember the work of Jesus.
- *Option 2:* Play "[How Deep the Father's Love for Us](#)" by Austin Stone Worship on YouTube. Encourage people to listen or sing if comfortable.

WORD The goal is to discuss God's Word together and apply it to your lives. Approx 50 min

Open in a word of prayer, inviting God to speak through His word and transform your hearts.

What main point from the sermon stood out to you? What did the Holy Spirit convict you of or encourage you with?

Have a volunteer read **1 John 4:7-21**.

- **HIGHLIGHT** What does the text say? (5-10 min)
 - What repeated words or key themes do you notice in this passage?
 - To whom was this passage written? *Use a study Bible to help as needed*
 - What words are confusing, if any? *Use a study Bible to help define them*
 - What does the word "propitiation" (v.10) mean? How might you explain it to a new Christian?
- **EXPLAIN** What does this text mean? (20 min)
 - What did God intend to communicate in this passage?
 - What does God reveal about Himself here?
 - What does God reveal about people here? What are we to be/do?
 - What does it mean to "abide in Him" (vv. 13-16)?
 - What does it mean to have "love perfected in us" (v 12, 17)?
 - How does this passage connect belief (confession of Jesus as the Son of God) with behavior (loving others)?

- How is love defined in these verses, and how is that similar/different than the world defines it?
- **APPLY** How does this text apply today? (20 min)
 - Where do you see evidence of God's love at work in your life right now?
 - Who is someone God may be calling you to love more intentionally? What might that look like for you?
 - How might abiding in God's love reshape how you interact with people in your church? Your community?
 - Is there a relationship where your actions don't line up with your confession of faith?
 - How does this group reflect the kind of love John describes here? How can we do better?
- **RESPOND** Pray, thanking God for what He revealed from the passage (5 min)

WANTS The goal is to share prayer requests and pray for one another. (Approx 20 min)

- *Option 1:* Break off into groups of 3-4 (same gender) to share prayer requests and pray for the person on your left. Encourage one another throughout the week by text. (LEADER NOTE: If doing this option, do WITNESS [below] before dividing.)
- *Option 2:* Share requests as a large group and pray for the person on your left.

WITNESS The goal is to get people thinking about others outside of the group. Approx 5 min

- *Option 1:* Who is one person in your life who needs to hear about the forgiveness found in Jesus? How can you make sure to share with him/her?
- *Option 2:* How can we as a group impact the city around us in the next 2 months?

LEADER REMINDERS

- **Let Josh know if your group is open or closed for new members as soon as possible. If open, how many new members can you take?**
- Reach out to at least one group member to encourage them in their walk with Jesus.
- Identify at least one potential leader in your group and ask them to help you lead one part of the group.

UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS

- **EQUIP CLASS: Financial Peace University** – starting Thursday evenings in mid-January to help people learn to manage finances and get out of debt. Cost is \$80 per family to cover materials. Register at southlandsc.org/events
- **GROUP LEADER HUDDLE** – January 11 right after service, for 1 hour. Lunch will be provided and kids can come. [Register here.](#)
- **GROUP LAUNCH SUNDAY** – January 25 right after service. Please be available to welcome group seekers, even if your group is not open.