

## Closing prayer

Together:

**Lord,  
we thank you for your gift of love,  
and ask for strength and wisdom  
to seek and share it in our lives.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Stewardship link

Stewardship is about discerning and nurturing our gifts, but above all, about using and sharing them. Through this we will be known as disciples of Christ.

## To do

Take some time to look around your community. Are there people who need someone to help, support and love them? You do not need to know how to help them, just the courage to let them know that they are loved. Perhaps there are groups or organisations that operate in your parish that make Christ's love known through action. Or perhaps there is a group like this in the wider community.

Are you being called to join such a group in order to use your talents in a particular way?

*Take some time to note your responses in your notebook.*

# Diocese of Portsmouth Stewardship Reflection 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter Year C

**‘By this love you have for one another,  
everyone will know  
that you are my disciples.’**

(John 13:35)

## Opening prayer

Leader:

Let us pray  
that we may enjoy true freedom.

Response:

**God our Father,  
look upon us with love.  
You redeem and make us your children in Christ.  
Give us true freedom  
and bring us to the inheritance you promised.**

(Opening Prayer for Fifth Sunday of Easter)



## To share

What insights have you had in the last week? Is there something in your notebook that you would like to share with others in the group?

## To listen

John 13:31-35

## To think about

In this passage of John's Gospel Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for the time when he must leave them. He gives them a new commandment to 'love one another; just as I have loved you'.

This commandment is both a guide about how to live life as a follower of Christ and also a marker for whether we will be recognised as his followers. Our love for each other will not only guide us in our decisions but will also draw others to Christ.

As families, Christian communities, and the wider Church, the way we behave towards one other is central to our ability to bear witness to Christ in the world.

In a world where Christians are divided, communities seem broken and family life appears ever more dysfunctional, it would seem fair to ask if we can ever hope to witness to Christ's presence in the world. But he is here; his gifts penetrate every situation. We can find Christ in every relationship that is built on love.

## To reflect on

Think of moments, or a moment, when you have felt close to God. What was it about the moment that gave you that feeling?

When is it easy to love others? When is it more challenging?



## To discuss

What does this 'new commandment' mean to you?

Where is God inviting you to live out this commandment at this time in your life?

What are the outward signs (e.g. to the local community) that your parish / Pastoral Area has love for others as a central focus?