



A Few of My Favorite Things: “Unity of the Body of Christ”

Ephesians 4:1-6

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The Call: Maintain Your Unity

The Local Church

- ? What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of your calling?” How is this possible with all the political, social, moral divisions we face today. Is it best to leave these “powder kegs” alone, or is it possible to have “unity” while we agree to disagree? Why or why not?
- ? What does Paul mean in Ephesians 2:14 when he says “and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility?”
- ? What are the things that you appreciate about your local church?
- ? If our church didn’t exist, would our community look different? Why or why not?
- ? What would you miss if our church didn’t exist?

Local Church Insurance

*“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
Matthew 16:18*

Unity in our Community

- ? How can false assumption (I call it “assumicide.”) derail the unity of our family? Why are we so quick to think the worst? Why do the “what’s if’s”....almost ALWAYS lead in a negative direction? How can we stop the “what if’s” in their tracks?
- ? In the words “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” how does being eager change our responsibility? Is passivity a sin in this instance?
- ? What does “a spirit of disunity” look like in the church? How can disunity distort the message of Christ and therefore purport a debased version of the gospel? What are the tell-tale signs of this dangerous movement?

“We are one people under one sovereign (over all), omnipotent (through all), and omnipresent (in all) God.” As those created by and reconciled back to God, we are bound together as one. – John MacArthur

Worthy Walking

? Humility

- o A noted and distinguished author is quoted as exhorting the following. “Pride makes you look at your world with a skewed lens.” What is being skewed and how is it skewing one’s understanding of truth? Note: the writer of this devotional is the “noted and distinguished”

author quoted. Thus, displaying the antitheses of humility. (Insert smiley face here.)

? **Gentleness**

- The “Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament” quotes gentleness as, “the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance.” It’s pretty easy to point this flaw in others but could we be able to self-identify if this is us? Why or why not? Is it self-identifiable?

? **Patience – Long-suffering**

- It’s pretty easy to suffer for a short while but becomes exponentially more difficult when “long” is attached. What happens to your mind and body in the middle of long-suffering? If there is no short-term relief in sight; how can one provide comfort without also causing more pain?

? **Bearing with one another in love**

- This author is certain that everyone can relate to “bearing with one another” especially as it relates to long-term family relationships. But the key to this text lies in the last word. Love. There is love and there is self-love. There are several different kinds of love in the Bible for the single word ‘love’ in the English language. There are as follows:
 - Eros: Sexual love. Philia: Affectionate love. Storage: Love of a child. Agape: Selfless love. Ludas: Playful love. Pragma: Enduring Love
 - Thus, the kind of love one exemplifies has great implications on how one “bears”. How so? Take several definitions of love and play them out as it relates to “bearing” with one another.

? **We Are One**

- Adrian Rogers wrote an article on Agape love. You can find the full article here: lwf.org. Read the excerpt and discuss his question below.

The Bible uses “agape” to describe a very different, supernatural kind of love. In Romans 5:8 we read, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Here, “agape” is used to describe the nature of God’s love toward us. It is a sacrificial, self-giving love. It is love that pursued our good at God’s expense. It is undeserved love poured out on sinners. Notice that God’s love is not dependent on the recipient. He poured out His abundant love on us even when we were still sinners. He didn’t wait for us to get our lives together. He didn’t tell us to get cleaned up first. No, He sacrificially loved us even when we had absolutely nothing to offer Him. God’s love is completely different than the world’s love. The world says, “I’ll love you if you are worth loving.” God says, “I love you even when you’re at your worst.” The world says, “I’ll love you if you love me.” God says, “I love you unconditionally.” We are called to give the same “agape” love to others. God’s amazing love has been given to us, and we have the privilege of giving that love to others. In fact, love is supposed to be the defining characteristic of Christian relationships. In John 13:35, Jesus said to His disciples, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” When we sacrificially love others, we are showing the watching world what God is like. This is why love is so very important for Christians. When people look at our lives, they should see God.

*For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.
Ephesians 2:14-16*

- **What does it look like when we show “agape” love to other Christians? In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, we read the following:**
 - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. lwf.org