

## **Becoming A Community Of Unity Series**

**OCTOBER 12, 2022**

**Scripture: Romans 12:16-18**

**16. Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.**

**17. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.**

**18. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.**

**Summary: A lesson of building unity within the church and community.**

**Becoming a Community Church—We Must Be Unified**

**1. Unity is IMPORTANT!**

**Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, commanded us to practice unity.**

**Verse 16 of our text says**

**“16. Be of the same mind toward one another....”**

**Then in verse 18 he expands on this by saying**

**“18. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”**

**Paul tells us twice in our text that we are to be unified.**

**So why is unity so important?**

**It is because rivalries and disagreements among brethren are destructive. Disunity damages goodwill, trust and peace, three of the foundational elements of good human relations.**

**Disharmony hampers our progress toward important goals.**

**When we are at odds with our brother and sister, we become self-centered rather than love-centered.**

**How we act is a reflection on our relationship with the Father.**

**“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” – 1 Corinthians 14:33**

**Our behavior in our everyday actions tells the world what God is like.**

**We are a sermon in shoes, sometimes the only sermon that people will ever hear. If we are not unified, we do a disservice to God by portraying a negative and erroneous picture of who He is.**

**Unity is necessary for the growth of our church. It is difficult for a church to survive the slings of the enemy, but impossible to survive when we mis-identify the enemy!**

**Before Andrew Jackson became the seventh president of the United States, he served as a major general in the Tennessee militia. During the War of 1812 his troops reached an all-time low level in morale. As a result, they began arguing, bickering, and fighting among themselves.**

**It is reported that Jackson called them together on one occasion when tensions were at their worst and said, "Gentlemen! Let's remember, the enemy is over there."**

**What an appropriate word for the church today.**

**Some Christians behave as though their fellow brothers and sisters are "the enemy." Let us remember who our Enemy really is.**

**Let us stop infighting, and instead pull together, support one another, believe in one another, care for one another, and pray for one another.**

**Source: Charles Swindoll, Hope Again, Word 1996, p. 45.**

## **2. What is Unity?**

**If unity is so important that Christ would talk about it, and Paul would make it a central theme of some of his letters to the churches, what is it?**

**Let's begin with what it is not.**

**Unity doesn't mean you will not have disagreements.**

**It does not mean that everyone will always agree, because that is just not going to happen. Not in this church, not in any church.**

**"It is okay to disagree, but do it agreeably.**

**We can agree to disagree--until the Lord shows you that I'm right!" --Harry Ramey**

**Unity is what occurs when we handle our disagreements with love.**

**It means looking for compromise, or common ground.**

**It means listening and seeking the will of God over and above our own will.**

**It means looking for solutions to conflict rather than causing conflict.**

**It means admitting that sometimes, just sometimes you might be wrong!**

**Verse 17 of our text reads: “. 17Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”**

**I'd say this is a good way to sum up what unity is. Unity is respect.**

**It is respect for God, and for your fellow believer.**

**It means acknowledging their worth in your eyes, as well as what they may be worth to God.**

**Legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi, on what it takes to build a 'winning team':**

**"There are a lot of coaches with good ball clubs who know the fundamentals and have plenty of discipline but still don't win the game.**

**Then you come to the third ingredient: If you're going to play together as a team, you've got to care for one another. You've got to love each other.**

**Each player must be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself:**

**'If I don't block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken.**

**I must do my job well in order that he can do this.'**

**"The difference between weakness and greatness is the feeling these guys have for each other."-- Source: Lee Iacocca, Iacocca, Bantam, 1986**

### **3. How do we achieve Unity?**

**So, we've talked about why unity is important, and we've identified what unity is, now how do we get it?**

**How do we bring this bunch of cats and get them (US!!!) to cooperate and do things for the good of the Kingdom?**

**Well, we have to work on it.**

**We have to work at it.**

**We have to work, work, work.**

**Achieving peace and unity is not easy!**

**Harmony is not our natural state of affairs.**

**We are more like this anonymous prayer:**

**Dear God,**

**So far today I've done all right. I haven't gossiped. I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that!!**

**But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed. From then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help.**

**Amen!!**

**Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. – Romans 14:19**

**We also must guard our tongue.**

**A sharp tongue does more to hurt the unity of the fellowship than almost any other thing we could think of.**

**Diogenes said: ““We have two ears and only one tongue that we may hear more and speak less.”**

**We should take that admonition to heart.**

**It does us no good to say things that hurt our brother and sister.**

**EVEN IF THEY ARE TRUE! If they are true, we are to greet that brother and sister in love, and gently show him the error of his ways.**

**Conclusion:**

**The church is called the body of Christ. Have you ever thought about what it would be like if the members of our physical bodies behaved like the members of the spiritual body sometimes do?**

**HEART - "You know, I'm just stuck in a rut. For the last 45 years all I do is beat and beat. Lub, dub... lub, dub... lub, dub... I'm tired of it. It's time for someone else to step up and do this job. Okay, feet, it's up to you. You pump the blood.**

**LUNGS: We are so under-appreciated around here. I don't think the other organs realize that they couldn't do their jobs without us.**

**If we quit doing our job for a few minutes, everyone will finally see how valuable we are to this place.**

**The brain thinks he's big stuff. Humph! Let him do without some oxygen for a while and we'll see how important he is!**

**LIVER: "Why do I get all the dirty work? You think it's fun making bile? I've been in this body for 45 years now and do you think anyone has ever asked me to make any decisions, pump any blood, or perform any functions that are noticeable outside the body? Sometimes I wonder why I bother."**

**APPENDIX - "Ha! Just watch the rest of those organs work. Day after day, hour after hour, they work themselves do death. I'm just along for the ride.**

**Why contribute when I can just sit here and get the same nutrients and oxygen that they get? Why get involved?"**

**You get the idea. The point is that the individual parts that make up our bodies were created specifically for certain tasks within the body as a whole.**

**The body works as a finely tuned machine when all the parts do what they were uniquely gifted to do.**

**There are no unimportant parts -- except the appendix. Don't be an appendix in your church.**