

UNITY IN THE CHURCH – Part 2

John Hannah

UNITY IN THE CHURCH - Pt 2 (How?)
(Theme Verse: Acts 4:32)

INTRODUCTION

Last week we looked at why unity in the church is important, noting, firstly, that this was a specific matter of concern to our Lord in his prayer in John 17:20-26 and, secondly, that the call for unity amongst believers is a reoccurring theme throughout the New Testament. We noted also that this was not to be unity at any price – there being certain people with whom we are to have nothing to do. We further considered five characteristics of life that work to destroy unity, namely, pride, self-centredness, a complaining spirit, insensitivity, and an unwillingness to forgive.

WHAT PROMOTES UNITY?

The immediate answer is the opposite to all of those things that destroy unity!! If pride destroys unity then humility promotes it. Likewise, unity is promoted by putting others first, through a contented spirit, by sensitivity, and through forgiveness. However, at a different level we can identify at least three broad qualities that act to promote and cement unity within the body of Christ.

A Common Goal or Vision. The picture of the church in the early chapters of the books of Acts is of a body of believers, totally committed to each other and totally committed to making the gospel known. Their goal was simple, to take the gospel to Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and then to all the Earth. When the common vision involves a sense of urgency in taking the gospel to a lost generation – many other issues are seen for what they really are – trivia!!!

Spiritual Maturity/Wisdom. James 3:17, “*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits*”. Matt.5, “*Blessed are the peacemakers ---*”. Eph. 4:2, “*Be completely humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love -----*”. Spiritual maturity produces the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, etc., etc.

Edmund Burke, the British political writer in the late 1700s made the astute observation that, “Whatever disunites man from God, also disunites man from man”.

An Unswerving Determination to Serve. Consider Mark 10:35-45, and cross-reference with Matthew 20:20-28. This was no small request by James and John – it was an attempt to gain preferential treatment. The cup (v.38) was a Jewish metaphor for divine judgement. Jesus answers their request by pointing out that in the economy of God, true greatness comes only through service. He illustrates this by using his own life as an example. Consider the words of Phil. 2:5-7.

The crucial question: Is my mindset one of serving the body of Christ or one of being served?

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Seek answers from the Lord on two questions:

“Lord, where would you have me fellowship?”

“What are my spiritual gifts?” (See, for example, Rom. 12:1-9; Eph. 4; and I Cor.12)

If you are new or visiting; a special warm welcome to you. We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

This Morning
Speaker John Hannah

This Evening

- JCF 5.00pm
- Creation Evangelism 7.00pm

Next Sunday
26 July. Ross Pettigrew

Thursday Kidz Club
6:30 - 8:00 pm
7 - 12 year olds
Ph: Allan Maguire - 4767197

Prayer Items

Please pray that **Graeme & Rachel**, Philippines, would make good progress with the translation team in Batangas before they return to Manila for the new school term.

Please join in with thanksgiving with **Richard & Connie**, Japan as they celebrate entering into their 50th year of serving the Lord in Japan. They got off the boat in Yokohama on 11 July 1960, and then the fun began & May God continue to bless them as they carry on forward for Him in His service.

Continue to pray for the outreach opportunities we have with OAC.

