

UNITY

I. What is Unity?

Dictionary Definition

“the state of being one, or united; oneness, singleness”

“the quality of being one in spirit, sentiment, purpose, etc.”

“unified group or body”

“oneness, as in spirit, aims, interest, feelings, etc.”

union - state of being united into a single organization for a common purpose

solidarity - implies such firm and complete unity in an organization, group, class, etc. as to make for the greatest possible strength in influence, action, etc.

From I Cor 12:12-27 & Rom 12:4-5: Many parts/members, but one body

II. Why should we strive for unity?

☞ Jesus wants us to live in unity (John 17:20-23)

☞ Unity is a good witness to unbelievers (John 13:34-35)

Unity brings blessing (Psalms 133)

We are a family and should be devoted to each other in brotherly love (Rom 12:10)

We are one body, and individually members of one another (Rom 12:4-5; I Cor 12:12-27)

We are told to live in harmony with one another and to be of the same mind, have the same love and to be one in spirit and purpose (I Pet 3:8-9; Rom 12:16; I Cor 1:10; Phil 2:2)

So that we can with one heart & mouth glorify God (Rom 15:5-6)

III. What are some obstacles to unity?

☞ We are sinful by nature (even the Apostle Paul), and subject to jealousy, envy, anger selfishness, pride and unforgiveness (Romans 6,7,8)

☞ Gossip (Prov 16:28)

- ☞ Slander; Judging (James 4:11-12)
- We are often misunderstood
- We interpret things differently (i.e., different perspectives)
- Intentional deception (by man and by Satan)

IV. *What should be the basis for unity?*

- Biblical truth (Eph 4:11-16; John 8:31-32, 17:17; Jude)
- Position in Christ -- children of God (I John 3:1-2; John 1:12)
- Common purpose: glorify God, make disciples; 5 Purposes of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Evangelism (I Cor 10:31; Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Phil 2:2)

V. *What are the keys to promote unity?*

- Put on love, which binds together in perfect unity (Col 3:12-14)
- Unconditionally love each other (John 13:34-35)
- Make love a priority (great commandment) (Mt 22:34-40)
- ☞ Do not look out only for your own interests, but also the interests of others (Phil 2:1-4)
- ☞ Look to please others, not ourselves (Rom 15:2-3)
- ☞ Sacrifice for others; do good works for each other (Gal 6:10; I John 3:16-18)
- Be quick to forgive and have a forgiving spirit (Col 3:12-14)
- ☞ Be patient with each other, compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and sympathetic (Col 3:12-14; Eph 4:1-6, 29-32; I Pet 3:8)
- ☞ Honesty and openness – speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15)
- ☞ Humility (James 4:6,10)
- ☞ Honor each other; courtesy (Rom 12:10; Titus 3:2)
- ☞ Encourage each other (Rom 1:12, 12:10, 14:19)
- ☞ Confidentiality (Prov 16:28)
- ☞ Confront divisive people (Titus 3:10)
- Accept one another (Rom 14:1, 15:7)
- Don't show favoritism (Jam 2:1)
- Actively pursue the things which make for peace and unity (Rom 14:19)

- Have a spirit of sharing (Acts 2:45)
- Meet together regularly in the church and in each other's homes; build relationships (Acts 2:46, 5:42; Heb 10:25)

From "Purpose Driven Life":

- 1) Share our true feelings (authenticity)
- 2) Encourage each other (mutuality)
- 3) Support each other (sympathy)
- 4) Forgive each other (mercy)
- 5) Speak truth in love (honesty)
- 6) Admit our weaknesses (humility)
- 7) Respect our differences (courtesy)
- 8) Not gossip (confidentiality)
- 9) Make group a priority (frequency)

Case Study: Early New Testament church (book of Acts)