

## **UNITY AMID DIVERSITY**

(Gal 3:26-29; Rom 10:12; I Cor 12:12-27; Col 3:9-11)

### **I. *God is creative, has imagination, and likes diversity! He made us different in many ways!***

What are some ways that He made us different or other differences that we develop?

- ☞ Age
- ☞ Race/ethnic
- ☞ Sex
- ☞ Spiritual gifts, talents skills & abilities
- ☞ Education
- ☞ Physical characteristics
- ☞ Jobs
- ☞ Preferences/interests
- ☞ Marital Status

### **II. *Our differences are not important, but our unity in Christ is!***

(Gal 3:26-29; Rom 10:12; I Cor 12:12-27; Col 3:9-11)

#### **A. *Single vs Married -- “different states, equal importance”***

Marriage is an honorable institution that was invented by God (Gen 2:18-25; Mt 19:3-8). The Bible is pro-marriage.

However, the Bible is also pro-singleness. Many great Christians over the years have been single (e.g. Jesus Christ, Apostle Paul, etc.). The Bible teaches that some are called to be married, and some are called to be single -- in fact all of us start out single and many people that were married end their lives single because of death or divorce. People that are single should feel good about their status and people that are married should feel positively towards those that are single. Some Biblical principles related to singleness include:

- 1) God calls some people to be single; being single is a gift and calling from God (Mt 19:10-12; I Cor 7:7).
- 2) It can be good not to marry (I Cor 7: 1,8), and being single has potential advantages, including:
  - a) avoid needless troubles/problems (I Cor 7:28)
  - b) make better use of limited time (I Cor 7:29-31)
  - c) freedom from concerns (I Cor 7:23)
  - d) ability to give undistracted attention to things of the Lord (I Cor 7:32-35)
- 3) In heaven, we will ALL be single (Lk 20:27-36, Mk 12:25)

- 4) Relationships with members of the opposite sex should be pure (I Thes 4:1-8).

## ***B. Male versus Female -- “equal value, sometimes different roles”***

Biblical teachings regarding church roles:

- 1) Women are equal in value to men, and there is no distinction in terms of importance to God (Gal 3:26-29; Gen 1:27, 5:2; Joel 2:29).
- 2) Elders should lead the church; Elders should be men (I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Elders should be loving, servant leaders (Mt 20:25-28; Jn 13:1-17).
- 3) Under the authority of Eldership, women probably can participate in any role or position, including teaching, leading, serving, etc. Following are examples of women prophets, leaders, teachers, servants, deacons, etc.:

### Old Testament

- ☞ Deborah (Judges 4 & 5) -- prophetess and Judge who led Israel
- ☞ Miriam, sister to Aaron (Ex 15:20) -- prophetess
- ☞ Huldah (2 Ki 22:14) -- prophetess
- ☞ Noadiah (Neh 6:14) -- prophetess
- ☞ Isaiah's wife (Is 8:3) -- prophetess

### New Testament

- ☞ Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3; Rm 16:3; I Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19) -- teacher, and helped lead a house church
- ☞ Daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) -- four daughters who prophesied
- ☞ Phoebe (Rm 16:1-2) -- female deacon; likely person who delivered Paul's letter to the Romans
- ☞ Tabitha (a.k.a. Dorcas) (Acts 9:36-41) -- extremely charitable servant
- ☞ Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) -- provided hospitality to Paul
- ☞ Tryphena & Tryphost (Rm 16:12) -- women who worked hard in the Lord
- ☞ Eyodia & Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3) -- fellow workers with Paul
- ☞ Nympha -- hosted a house church
- ☞ Anna (Lk 2:36-38) -- prophetess
- ☞ Mary of Bethany (Lk 10:38-42; Jn 11:1-46; Mk 14:3-9) -- devoted follower/disciple of Christ
- ☞ A number of women followed and supported Jesus (Lk 8:1-3, 23:49,55, 24:22-24; Mt 27:55; Mk 15:40-41)
- ☞ Women were an important part of early New Testament church (Acts 1:12-14, 5:14, 8:5, 12, 17:4, 12)
- ☞ Women prophesied and prayed in church (I Cor 11:5)
- ☞ Female Deacons (I Tim 3:11)