

The Unity of the Church

- I. The members of the church are declared to be one in Christ. **1CO 10:17; GAL 3:27-28.**
 - A. The Corinthians were declared to be one in Christ even though in practice they were quite divided. **1CO 3:3; 1CO 11:18.**
 - B. The Spirit of God joins baptized believers into one body. **1CO 12:12-13.**
 - C. The members of the church have the things listed in **EPH 4:4-6** in common. These things unite them.

- II. We are commanded to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We should live as one because we are one. **EPH 4:3.**
 - A. Note that unity is maintained in the bond of peace.
 - B. Unity entails peace. **EPH 2:15; ACT 7:26.**
 - C. We are called to peace in one body. **COL 3:15.**
 - D. Practical unity means that we speak the same thing; that there be no divisions among us; that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. **1CO 1:10.**
 - E. This practical unity is enjoined by the authority of Jesus Christ. **1CO 1:10.**

- III. Unity among believers does not exclude all differences.
 - A. Though we are one body, we have not all the same office. **ROM 12:4-8; 1CO 12:4-12.**
 - B. Differences in matters of liberty can exist without disrupting the church's unity. **ROM 14.**
 - C. Though we are one body, we do not all have the same degree of growth in knowledge and strength. **ROM 15:1-2; 1CO 8:4-13; 14:16.**

- IV. There are blessings in practical Christian unity.
 - A. It is good and pleasant. **PSA 133:1.**
 - B. It becomes the gospel of Christ. **PHIL 1:27.**
 1. We should not strive *against* one another.
 2. We should rather strive *together* for the faith of the gospel.
 3. Note how the enemies of God are united against the truth. **ACT 7:57; 18:12; 4:27-28; PSA 83:2-5; REV 17:13-14.**
 - a. If there is anything that will unite the wicked, it is having a common righteous opponent. **LUK 23:12.**
 - b. If the wicked can show this much solidarity against the truth, how much more should we be united for the truth?
 - C. It is conducive to effectual prayer and evangelism. **MAT 18:19; ACT 4:24-33.**
 - D. It facilitates stability and accomplishment of purpose. **MAT 12:25.**
 - E. It glorifies God. **ROM 15:5-6.**
 - F. The God of love and peace will be with those who are of one mind and who live in peace. **2CO 13:11.**

- V. There are several means to maintaining Christian unity.
 - A. We must recognize a common final authority: Scripture (**GAL 4:30**) and this cannot be done when diverse corruptions of Scripture are deemed equals to THE Scripture.
 - B. We must agree in faith and righteousness. **AMO 3:3; 2CO 6:14-16.**
 - C. Unity must be according to Jesus Christ. **ROM 15:5-6.**
 - D. Unity is achieved through instruction. **EPH 4:11-16.**
 1. Pastors are given to promote unity but not a disorderly unity. **1CO 14:26, 33, 40.**

2. A pastor's joy is fulfilled when his people are unified. **PHIL 2:2.**
3. Proper instruction will save the Lord's children from the divisions contrary to the doctrine of God. **ROM 16:17.**
 - a. This shows that unity cannot be at the expense of truth. **1TI 1:3; 6:3-5.**
 - b. God abominates those who thus sow discord among brethren. **PRO 6:19.**
- E. Unity is kept by our walking according to the apostolic rule. **PHIL 3:15-17.**
- F. Unity is maintained by our forbearing one another which means *bearing with, having patience with, and putting up with one another.* **EPH 4:2-3; ROM 15:1.**
- G. Unity is kept by forgiving one another if we have a quarrel. **COL 3:12-13.**
- H. Unity is maintained by our esteeming each other better than ourselves in all lowliness of mind. **EPH 4:2; PHIL 2:1-3.**
- I. Unity is kept by our care and compassion for one another.
PHIL 2:4; 1PE 3:8-9; 1CO 12:20-27; ROM 12:15-16.
- J. Charity will bind us together perfectly if we put it on. **COL 3:14 c/w 1CO 13:4-7.**