

I Believe in the Unity of All Believers – Part 2

In my last devotion I pointed out three reasons why unity is the birthright of the church. Those three reasons speak of what unites us as Christians: we are united by a common salvation, a common mission, and a common destination. Yet we need to work to maintain and manifest this unity on earth. Just because Paul spoke of the church as “one body” in Ephesians 4.4 did not prevent him from urging those same believers to maintain this unity. He wrote, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph 4.3). The following are four tips on how to manifest unity in the church.

First, don't major on the minors. Don't strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. We may disagree on certain issues like the millennium or eternal security and we should know what we believe about these issues. Yet, these are not doctrines that determine whether or not a person is saved. What really matters in terms of unity is that we agree on the essentials: the Trinity, the authority and inspiration of Scripture, the bodily resurrection of Christ, salvation by grace, etc. *Secondly, learn to accept people who are different than you are.* Not everyone is like you. Some people worship different than you or have a different skin color than you. Yet, as Paul said, we are all one in Christ Jesus (see Gal 3.26-28). We need to learn to accept one another in Christ despite our differences.

Thirdly, avoid gossip and criticism. Some people are always talking about other people or pointing out what's wrong in the church. As Christians, we should have a positive attitude and learn to hold our tongue. Proverbs 26.20 says, “Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.” If more Christians would work to put out fires rather than help keep them going through their gossip, the church would be a much better place.

Lastly, have a forgiving spirit. This is absolutely essential for church unity. We must forgive one another and love one another despite our disagreements and struggles. Paul writes, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col 3.13). Unfortunately, if you stay in the church long enough you're going to get hurt by someone. Why? Because the church is made up of imperfect people. So we need to learn to forgive. If you're carrying a grudge against someone in the church, why not let it go

today? Why not choose love rather than hate? Christ would be pleased and the church would be healthier if you did.

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