

BUILDING A GREAT CHURCH GREAT UNITY

Psalm 133:1.. Nothing can take the place of unity. True of the home, nation, church. Harmony is one of the loveliest things of life. . . a family working together to attain goals. . . a team playing closely together to win the game. . . a group singing in harmony. Best of all is harmony in the church, with all the parts of the body working in the spirit of peace and love! This kind of unity overcomes a lot of obstacles. The unity that inspires confidence and growth. Unity smooths out rough roads. the church that is bickering and fussing is doomed to decay and division. Division is a work of the flesh (Gal.5 :19-21); it is devilish (James 3:14-18); it is the cause of infidelity and unbelief (John 17:20,21); it is something that God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19).

I. Unity Must Be Meaningful.

- A. Unity must be something we desire.
- B. Platform for unity is laid out by inspiration of H/S in Eph. 4:3-6
 - 1. Unity of organization—one body.
 - 2. Unity of life—one Spirit
 - 3. Unity of purpose—one hope
 - 4. Unity of authority—one Lord
 - 5. Unity of teaching—one faith
 - 6. Unity of practice—one baptism
 - 7. Unity of worship—one God.
- C. Without these unity is powerless.
- D. Other verses
 - 1. Romans 14:19—follow after
 - 2. Philippians 1:27—striving together
 - 3. Philippians 2:2-4--like-minded
 - 4. Ephesians 4:3—endeavoring
- E. Heaven takes note of how we treat each other.
 - 1. Matt. 25:31-46
 - 2. I Cor. 8:12
 - 3. How we treat the body is how we treat the Lord.

II. Unity Must Be Made.

- A. Unity does not just happen.
- B. Unity among brethren, building a team spirit, means a lot of hard work and self-sacrifice.
- C. There are several essentials to establishing unity.
 - 1. Conversion to Christ is the key ingredient.
 - 2. Sense of belonging.
 - a. Every member of the body must feel loved, accepted, fully welcome.
 - b. If not, likely will fall away.
 - c. They need to be “plugged in” somewhere.
 - d. Most congregations are made up of:
 - (1) Those who make things happen.
 - (2) Those who watch things happen.
 - (3) Those who never know what happened.
 - 3. Recognition of value and power of each member.
 - a. Eph. 4:16
 - b. I Cor. 12:12-27-All members of the body to work together.
 - c. All members of an orchestra (team, etc...) May be playing, but not well till all play together.

- d. Lord as concerned with one-talent man as the five (Matt. 25).
- e. Each of us are tools in the box of the carpenter of Nazareth.
- 4. Vision of greatness.
 - a. When Christians see a vision, a chart of the future, looking together by faith on what can be done for Christ, they will respond in unity and enthusiasm.
 - b. Big things happen to big thinking people.
 - c. Must have goals, dreams that capture the imagination, faith and enthusiasm of the Lord's people.
- 5. Reward of satisfaction from hard work and sacrifice.
 - a. Ultimate reward is heaven.
 - b. Must learn to "give honor..." (Romans 13:7)
 - c. Everyone appreciates appreciation—such promotes unity.
- D. At times, differences must be worked out.
 - 1. Lord knew differences would arise among brethren.
 - 2. Knew these differences needed to be worked out if unity and love were to prevail.
 - 3. Matthew 18:15-20
 - 4. I Timothy 5:19
 - 5. The negative faultfinders, the gossips, the backbiters, would never be able to do their work if each Christian practiced the teachings of Christ.
 - 6. Devil does his most powerful and insidious work on congregations that are doing well.
 - 7. How wonderful it would be if every member of the church loved the work our Lord gave us, loved to see the church grow and win; and loved all the fellow saints.
- III. Unity Must Be Maintained.
 - A. More to unity than making it – it must be kept, maintained.
 - B. This is where the work gets hard and humbling.
 - C. Disruptions to unity must be dealt with firmly, gently, immediately.
 - 1. Problems are often blown out of proportion when allowed to fester and grow.
 - 2. There is an unwavering truth about problems (in the church, home, government), that they get worse instead of better.
 - 3. I Cor. 1:10
 - 4. I Cor. 12:25
 - 5. Titus 1:9-11
 - D. To maintain unity we must realize:
 - 1. Unity begins at the top (if devil can split eldership, can split the church).
 - 2. Each of us have our weaknesses, failings, differences.
 - a. Romans 15:1-2
 - b. Gal. 6:1,2
 - c. I Peter 4:8
 - d. Poem: "To Dwell"
 - To dwell above with the saints we love, O that will be the glory
 - To dwell below with the saints we know, Well, that's another story!
 - 3. Unity is kept by positive attitudes.
 - a. Gal. 5:15
 - b. Heb. 10:24
 - 4. Unity depends on knowing each other, sweet fellowship.
 - a. II Pet. 1:11
 - b. Experience and observation have shown that members that share good times together, eat together, have opportunities to share friendships seldom have divisive troubles.
 - c. Hospitality in our homes is one of the needed virtues of our time.
 - 5. Unity is kept by good people who are Christ-like in thinking, working and dealing with others.

- a. The closer we come to the ideal person of Jesus, the closer we come to each other.
- b. Romans 14:19

Con: In order to build a great church, we must work for great unity. Unity must be meaningful... it must be made...it must be maintained.

Do you Just Belong?

Are you an active member
The kind that would be missed,
Or are you just content
To have your name on the list.

Do you attend the meetings,
And mingle with the flock,
Or do you stay at home instead
And criticize and knock?

Do you take an active part
To help the work along
Or are you satisfied
To be a "just belong?"

Do you ever go and visit
With the members who are sick,
Or leave the work to just a few,
And talk about the "clique?"

Think this all over, member,
You must know right from wrong,
Are you an active member,
Or do you just belong.

[Based on sermons from How To Build A Great Church]