

CHURCH UNITY

Dear Friend:

Once upon a time, the story goes that a certain church was certainly having trouble staying together, there was a real lack of unity. For some reason, the church Board thought it would be a good idea to build a new church building to help bring the church together. So, the Board (who couldn't get along themselves) voted on a building plan to take to the congregation and it went like this: "We will build a new church building, and the new building will be located where the present building is. The material of the old building shall be used to build the new building but, we shall continue to use the old building until the new building is built". The congregation, in a 51%-49% vote, voted to approve the building plan. And the new building has never been built to this day. Dis-unity can be the death of a church.

The Apostle Paul wrote a very strong letter of unity to the church at Ephesus. They were not struggling with unity; actually, they were a "shining star church". Apparently, even the best of churches will eventually need direction on unity. In Ephesians 4 Paul guides us into church unity by laying out 3 universal church realities for establishing church unity.

The first reality: THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US. Paul says the challenge is to live a life worthy of our calling. What calling? The calling to live a Christ-like life. He then lays-out a few characteristics of a Christ-like life. He says: "Be completely humble and gentle, be patient and bear with one another". Without these character traits among church members, unity can never be achieved. The second reality: THE COMMITMENT BETWEEN US. What commitment? The commitment TO BE unified and stay unified. We are told that we are to keep the unity through the Holy Spirit. Read Proverbs 16:9, God hates dis-unity. The third reality: THE CHARISMA AMONG US. In Ephesians 4:7-16 Paul digs into the subject of Jesus and his grace (Greek: charis) towards us. He also digs into some spiritual gifts (Greek: charismata). The specific gifts listed in this passage are there to explain that all church members need to be trained to put spiritual gifts into action. This is a part of helping believers grow-up in their faith.

Church unity, it takes more than prayer, it takes the action of God's people in the church. Let's take action!

Prayer: Brenda Carpenter (recovery heart surgery), Dick Fisher (recovery from lumbar tap, brain tumor), Praise God for Building Fund Goal exceeded

Events: This Sunday, double book blessing, Free stuff giveaway starts. Two weeks out don't miss the intense and real-life movie, The Last Supper and the life of Christ. March 29, 1:45 p.m. Movies 16 Stoneridge Plaza.