

Name: _____

SUNDAY, JULY 7TH

Series Title: The Power of Unity

Lesson Title: The Importance of Unity in the Church

Key Scriptures: Psalm 133:1

The Importance of Unity in the Church

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to come together in unity, loving one another and honoring God with our unified commitment to His mission. The Bible is full of powerful reminders of the importance of unity within the church. Unity among Christians is essential to the success of the church and its mission. In **Psalm 133:1**, it says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"

What is unity? Does it mean that you all love pizza and hate pickles? All love the same TV shows and all like yellow? Of course, not — we're all different, and that's great. **So, what does it mean to be unified with people who are different from you?**

Unity in the church is about individuals “**coming together**” - in the name of Jesus to form and accomplish something bigger than we can do on our own. It's recognizing that we're stronger together than we are individually.

Why is unity so important in the church? Jesus prayed about it. Just before Jesus was crucified, He prayed for His followers. In this prayer, Jesus prayed for the unity of the church (John 17:20-24). What if churches were actually operating in unity? What if members were striving together constantly to fulfill God's mission? We might see God move in ways none of us have ever seen.

God Works Through Our Unity

The principle of unity is clearly illustrated in the book of Nehemiah. Called by God to rebuild the dilapidated wall of Jerusalem, Nehemiah faced this

challenging task by gathering a strong team of builders and artisans to complete the work. Nehemiah 4:6 states that “So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”

Nehemiah 6:15-16 says,

So the wall was finished...in fifty and two days. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that **this work was wrought of our God.**

In just 52 days, Nehemiah and his team rebuilt the wall – which took 4 years to build initially. Even though challenges arose, his team’s unity of purpose caused the rebuilding to happen quickly and successfully. This serves as a reminder that if we can set about a task with all our hearts, **with a unity of purpose**, the Church becomes an effective and powerful vehicle for God to work.

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Our unity invites the presence of God into our situations. Unity is one of the strongest spiritual forces there is!

Ephesians 4:3

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Unity in the church doesn't necessarily happen automatically because the devil doesn't want us to advance the Kingdom of God. As with any relationship, we have to work continually at building and maintaining this unity. Ephesians 4:3 makes that clear when it commands us to **make every effort** to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

How can we make every effort to maintain unity? Here are ten ways you can do your part to create unity in the church.

1. Remember Your Common Identity

First, it's important to keep your **common identity** at the forefront. You are united by something that goes far beyond a similar personality, interests or even a sports franchise. You share a common identity and that is in **Jesus Christ**. We are Christians, adhering to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

2. Uphold Our Christian Beliefs and Values

1 Corinthians 1:10

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

It does not take long to look around and realize that we live in a very divided world. Social issues, political views, and the ability for a person to make their opinions public through Facebook and Twitter have allowed for discord and disagreement to become the norm rather than the exception.

And even when it's 2025, and everything else has been changed, revised, edited, updated... God's Word stays the same, because it is timeless. It's not invalidated by time, it does not expire, and when everything else has turned left or right... it is **the same Word of God** that is still right on course past, present, future, forever. So, no matter what, let's come in unity and speak according to God's Word and His principles.

Here are some of the biblical principles we stand on as Christians:

1. We are Christians! We don't worship Muhammad, Buddha, the Universe - or any other person or entity. We worship Jesus Christ! (Luke 4:8)
2. We believe in the sanctity of life. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. We don't kill people. We don't have abortions. We don't commit suicide. We are called to defend, protect and value all human life. (Exodus 20:13)
3. We don't smoke anything – cigarettes/cigars, marijuana; and we don't vape. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

4. We don't drink alcohol. We don't drink wine, wine coolers, liquor, flavored liqueurs, nothing that can take us out of being "sober-minded". (1 Peter 5:8)
5. We don't gamble or play the lottery. (1 Timothy 6:10)
6. We don't engage in the works of the flesh: Adultery, fornication (premarital sex), uncleanness, lasciviousness (operating like you have a license to sin), Idolatry (worshiping anything other than God), witchcraft (horoscopes, tarot cards, palm reading, etc.), hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings (partying), and such like. (Galatians 5:16)
7. We live our lives with integrity – we shouldn't lie, cheat or steal. (Proverbs 6:16-19)
8. We don't listen to worldly music. (Ephesians 5:19)
9. We don't use profanity or any other obscene language. (Ephesians 4:29)
10. We don't allow anyone to speak negatively about our Pastors, Church or our sisters and brothers. (James 4:11)

We cannot list everything that we don't do as Christians – but in every situation, when you aren't sure what to do, do what honors God.

3. Giving to Your Church

Tithing and Offering is the system God uses to finance His church. When we come together in unity and the spirit of collective commitment, the Church can provide worship and gathering space for its members and further the work of the Lord throughout the world. Operating in God's economy will also bring financial blessing to your household – the Bible says you won't have room enough to receive the blessing!

4. Acknowledge Your Need for Community

The phrase "no man is an island" doesn't come from the Bible, but it certainly goes along with what the Word of God has to say about people and our need for community. You may be thinking, "but I'm an introvert" or "I'm an independent

person." It's fine if you enjoy some alone time to catch up on your favorite show or read a book, but the fact is, none of us — not even the most introverted — would do well living in isolation. We need each other.

We need other Christians in our church to help us work through difficult times in our lives and even to rejoice with us when things are going great. We also need others to help us see areas where we need to grow and to pray for us. When we acknowledge our need for each other and do our best to live in community with other believers, it lays the foundation for unity.

5. Stay Humble

Being humble helps us to see our brothers and sisters as valuable to the body of Christ and strengthens our ability to work together. In discussing the importance of unity to the Ephesians, Paul says, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Philippians 2:3-4 says, rather than being conceited, we should "in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to just your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Why is it so important to be humble? For one, when we're mindful of our own weaknesses, we're less likely to act self-righteous and judgmental and more likely to be gracious toward our brothers and sisters in Christ who have weaknesses of their own. When each of us remains humble, we value each other more and truly feel our need for each other.

6. Embrace Your Differences

In 1 Corinthians, the Bible uses the human body as a metaphor for the church. Just as the body is comprised of different parts, all of which serve their own function, every member that makes up a church also serves their own function. To put it more simply, each of us has our own unique gifts, strengths and weaknesses. This passage makes it clear that unity doesn't mean we're all the same. We are each a unique piece that fits together to form a unified whole.

The person who sits in front of you in church may be a great teacher. The person behind you may be an amazing encourager. Or maybe they can make a batch of brownies that brings you and others a little piece of Heaven on Earth. No one person needs to be great at everything because we have each other.

When we embrace each other's differences; talents, gifts and abilities, we can accomplish everything that God is calling the church to do. On a side note, if everyone in a church was exactly the same, it would be a pretty dull place.

7. Believe the Best in Others

When we're cynical and assume the worst about other people, we're bound to experience some disunity. For example, imagine a friend at church walks past you and doesn't say hi. You could assume they didn't see you or were in a hurry to get somewhere, or you could become offended and assume they must be giving you the silent treatment. Which of these responses is healthier and more conducive to maintaining unity?

Sure, there may be times when someone truly is brushing you off deliberately, but you can do a lot more harm by assuming the worst and being wrong than you can by assuming the best and being wrong. Wouldn't you want a friend to give you the benefit of the doubt? All of us have beautiful qualities and some not-so-beautiful qualities. Choose to focus on the good. The bottom line is; **whether we look for the best in people or the worst, we'll find it.**

8. Work Through Conflict

We all know that relationships with our family and friends can get messy at times. Maybe you've had a family dinner that ended in an argument. Whenever you're close to someone, it's inevitable that your faults and differences will lead to some conflict. The question is, how will we respond? Do we pull away or lean in and work through the conflict? Relationships with our **church family** can also get messy at times, and our response is just as important there.

As Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthian church, he urges them to "strive for full restoration" in their relationships. Instead of letting the issue drive a wedge between you and your brothers and sisters in the church, work through the conflict with them. Don't hesitate to ask for forgiveness when needed and be quick to forgive so you can enjoy full restoration in your relationships.

9. Don't Sow Discord!

Proverbs 6:16-18

These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth **discord among brethren**.

Proverbs 6 gives us a glimpse into God's heart concerning unity. The bottom line is, the Lord hates discord - strife and contention amongst the brothers and sisters in Christ. The scripture lets us know that sowing discord can tear down unity in a church. Left unchecked, it would be a recipe for disaster in a church.

10. Don't Gossip

Gossip also falls into this category of sowing discord. We tend to love gossip. Maybe it's because calling attention to other people's dirty laundry makes us feel better about ourselves. Unfortunately, many people in the church love gossip too, though we tend to frame it a little differently. We may say things like, "Pray for so-and-so because I heard..." or throw in a "bless their heart" for good measure. No matter how we frame it, the Bible makes it clear that there is no place for gossip in the church.

Gossip is an excellent way to create disunity in the church. Listen, when Christians hear someone gossiping, they should take a hard stance by lovingly calling the person out and redirecting the conversation. No matter how tempted you may be to talk about a fellow believer, you should commit yourself to building others up rather than talking badly about them behind their backs.

Churches United

There is exponential power in unity! The Bible says 1 person can chase 1,000 and 2 people can put 10,000 to flight. Well, what about 2 whole churches? Or 3...or more churches? Our Senior Pastors started the Churches United organization to unite together, build strong churches, and get in position to make a greater global impact for Christ...and it is working!

God is working through the organizational unity and the anointed Leadership. Churches are growing, buying property, developing their leadership, reaching

more souls for Jesus Christ and seeing real transformation in their congregations!

Churches United is also empowering individuals through conferences, conventions, monthly training sessions, ministry resources and more. Combining our resources through this powerful partnership of churches means that we have more power and influence to effect change.

Make sure you register yourself and your children (age 3 – 12th grade) today for our upcoming Churches United Convention – details are available on churchesunited.com. We are coming together to do greater than what we can do on our own!

The bottom line is, unity is essential for any kind of achievement. It's needed in churches, families, businesses, etc. but especially in the church, there must be unity for God to be able to work and for the church to become all that God wants it to be.

We are commanded to make unity a top priority. The Bible commands us: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). As Christians we are called to promote and maintain unity in the church—no matter what it takes!

SUNDAY SCHOOL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Lesson: The Importance of Unity in the Church

Lesson Introduction

1. **Fill in the Blank:** As believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to come together in _____, loving one another and honoring God with our unified commitment to His mission.
2. **Where is this scripture found?:** "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"
 - a. Psalm 23:4
 - b. Psalm 133:1
 - c. Psalm 13:31
 - d. Psalm 11:31
3. **True or False (circle one):** Unity in the church is about people sowing discord.

God Works Through Our Unity

4. **Answer the Question:** The wall of Jerusalem took 4 years to build initially. How long did it take for Nehemiah and his team to rebuild and repair it because they were unified?
 - a. 25 days
 - b. 52 days
 - c. 5 days
 - d. 2 days
5. **Fill in the Blanks:** Ephesians 4:3 commands us to make every effort to keep the _____ of the _____ in the bond of _____.

Remember Your Christian Identity

6. **True or False (circle one):** As Christians, we are united in our common identity in Jesus Christ.

Uphold Our Christian Beliefs and Values

7. **Answer the Question:** In the lesson, there are 10 biblical principles listed that we stand on. Write out three of the principles in the space provided below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Giving To Your Church

8. **Fill in the Blanks:** _____ and _____ is the system God uses to finance His church. When we _____ in _____ and the spirit of collective commitment the Church can provide worship and gathering space for its members and further the work of the Lord throughout the world.

Acknowledge Your Need for Community

9. **Fill in the blanks:** When we acknowledge our need for _____ and do our best to live in community with other believers, it lays the foundation for _____.

Stay Humble

10. **True or False (circle one):** Being humble helps us to see our brothers and sisters as valuable to the body of Christ and strengthens our ability to work together.

Embrace Your Differences

11. **Fill in the Blanks:** When we embrace each other's _____; _____, _____ and _____, we can accomplish everything that God is calling the church to do.

Believe the Best in Others

12. **True or False:** When we're cynical and assume the worst about other people, we're bound to experience some disunity.

Work Through Conflict

13. **Fill in the Blanks:** Instead of letting the issue drive a wedge between you and your brothers and sisters in the church, work through the _____ with them. Don't hesitate to ask for _____ when needed and be quick to _____ so you can enjoy full restoration in your relationships.

Don't Sow Discord

14. **Answer the Question:** The reason God hates discord amongst the brothers and sisters in Christ is because...
- It can tear down unity in the church
 - Left unchecked, it would be a recipe for disaster in a church
 - Both answers a and b
 - None of the above

Don't Gossip

15. **True or False:** Gossip is an excellent way to create unity in the church.

Churches United

16. **True or False:** One of the ways we can unify as a church is by ensuring all the adults and youth in our family register and attend the Churches United Convention taking place on July 23rd – 26th.