

LifeGroup Discussion Questions  
Based on John 17:20-26  
January 26, 2020

Overview:

What does unity look like in the church? For some it looks like 100% agreement on all issues whether it is church related or not. Since this will never be a reality on this side of heaven, what does unity look like? Is it possible to be united and yet disagree with someone on several subjects? Sometimes we get unity and uniformity confused. We think for people to be united they need to be in agreement with one another all the time. There are several areas with Christianity that believers can disagree about and still be united.

Weirsbe once said, "Christ also prays for the unity of His church (v. 21). There is a vast difference between unity (oneness of heart and spirit) and uniformity (everybody exactly alike). Christ never prayed that all Christians would belong to one world church. Organizational mergers may bring about organizational uniformity, but they cannot guarantee unity. Unity comes from life within, not from pressure without. While true Christians belong to different denominations, they are all part of the true church, the body of Christ; it is this spiritual unity in love that convinces the world of the truth of the Gospel. It is possible for Christians to differ on minor matters and still love one another in Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Unity is a forgotten topic. We want unity as long as people think and believe the exact same way we do. As an example, let's pretend you believe everyone should only wear blue shoes. No matter the occasion or time of year you think everyone's shoes should be blue. You were raised to believe that all good Christians wear blue shoes. To wear anything else went against everything you believe.

Then it happens. You are at church and someone comes in wearing red shoes. You can't believe someone would be so disrespectful in a place of worship as to wear red shoes. Is it possible for you to set aside your personal opinion on blue shoes along with your upbringing and be united with a red shoed person? Most of us would say absolutely. What a silly example. Let's not talk about church dress code, worship style, pews versus chairs, or bringing coffee into the sanctuary. Disunity occurs when your opinion (or preferences) become God ordained essentials for salvation. Knowing the differences between essentials and preferences would solve a lot of unity issues with the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [\*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament\*](#) (p. 259). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Bible Study: John 17:20-26

1. Define unity.
2. What do you do when you disagree with someone within the church on preferences not essentials?
3. What is the difference between unity and uniformity?
4. In what ways do personal preferences cause division in the church?
5. What areas of opinion related to non-essentials do you tend to strongly hold onto?