

What Does It Mean to Live in Harmony with One Another?

Christian unity is one of the most important and most overlooked callings in the life of a believer. Romans 15:5-6 gives us a clear picture of what God desires for His people: to live in harmony with one another, with one mind and one voice, for the glory of Christ Jesus. This is not just a nice idea. It is a command, and it carries real weight.

Why Is Unity Among Believers So Important?

Of all the "one another" commands found in the New Testament, living in harmony with one another may carry the most weight. The reason is simple: Jesus Himself prayed for it.

On the night before He went to the cross, Jesus did not pray for wisdom for His followers. He did not pray for strength or power. He prayed that His people would be one.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." - John 17:20-21

If Jesus chose unity as the focus of His final prayer before the cross, that tells us everything we need to know about how seriously God takes it.

Two Reasons Jesus Prayed for Unity

There are two clear reasons why Jesus made unity His prayer that night.

First, He prayed for unity so that the world would believe God sent the Savior. Jesus directly connects the credibility of the gospel to the unity of His people. When believers live together in harmony, the world sees the love of Christ on display. Unity is not just an internal church matter. It is a witness to the world.

Second, Jesus prayed for unity because He knew we have a common enemy. Satan's primary strategy for slowing the advancement of the gospel is creating disunity among believers. When Christians are fighting and bickering with one another, the mission suffers and the gospel loses ground.

Does God Really Care About Division in the Church?

Yes, deeply. The writer of Proverbs lists seven things the Lord finds detestable, and the last one is a person who stirs up conflict in the community. God does not take division lightly.

But by contrast, the psalmist paints a beautiful picture of what unity looks like from God's perspective.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life forevermore." - Psalm 133:1-3

Where there is unity, God bestows His blessing. That is a promise worth protecting.

How Does the Enemy Attack Unity in the Church?

Understanding the enemy's strategies helps us guard against them. There are two primary ways disunity enters the body of Christ.

1. Interpersonal Conflicts Between Believers

Unresolved tension between people in the church is one of the enemy's most effective tools. Jesus addressed this directly in the Sermon on the Mount.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." - Matthew 5:23-24

Jesus is saying that reconciliation with a fellow believer takes priority even over worship. That is how seriously He takes it. And if someone reaches out to you seeking reconciliation, you have a Christian responsibility to receive them with grace and forgiveness. There is no room for ghosting someone who is trying to make things right.

Paul echoes this in Romans 12: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." - Romans 12:18

2. Secondary Issues and Personal Preferences

Most churches can agree on the core essentials of the Christian faith. The real battleground tends to be secondary issues, things that matter but do not determine eternity. These include views on end times, creation and science, worship styles, men's and women's roles in the church, and spiritual gifts.

None of these are unimportant. But when our passion for secondary issues outweighs our passion for the gospel and for reaching the lost, something has gone wrong. The enemy uses these disagreements to pull our attention away from the mission and slow the advancement of the kingdom.

What Is the Church's Common Mission?

Unity is not just about avoiding conflict. It is about rallying together around a shared purpose. Jesus made that purpose clear.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." - Matthew 28:19-20

Making disciples is the mission. Not preferences, not programs, not secondary debates. When a church loses sight of this, it experiences what could be called mission drift, where good things slowly replace the main thing.

Embracing the gospel, making disciples, and being sent on mission into the world are the three pillars that keep a church anchored to what matters most.

What Is the Strategy for Staying Unified?

The strategy is love. It has always been love.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:34-35

Every one another command in the New Testament is ultimately a picture of what it looks like to love one another the way Jesus loved us. Forgiving one another, encouraging one another, welcoming one another, confessing to one another, and living in harmony with one another are all expressions of that love.

When a church commits to loving one another as its strategy, it can navigate difficult transitions, survive hard seasons, and continue to move forward on mission together. Love is what makes unity possible even when preferences differ.

Life Application

This week, take an honest look at your relationships within your church community and beyond. Is there someone you have been avoiding? Is there unresolved tension you have been putting off addressing? Jesus says to leave your gift at the altar and go make it right first.

Your challenge this week is to take one concrete step toward reconciliation or unity. That might mean sending a text, making a phone call, or sitting down with someone over coffee. It might also mean choosing to let go of a secondary issue that has been creating distance between you and another believer.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect:

- Is there someone in my life I need to pursue reconciliation with, and what is stopping me?
- Am I allowing secondary issues or personal preferences to take priority over the gospel and the mission God has called me to?
- What would it look like for me to actively love the people around me in a way that reflects the unity Jesus prayed for?

Unity is not passive. It requires effort, humility, and a willingness to put the mission above personal comfort. But where unity is present, God bestows His blessing. That is worth fighting for.