

Welcome One Another

We've had such a great summer of learning and growing together as we have focused on church unity. During August, we will spend our time examining Romans 14-15. How should we act when we disagree? As we think congregationally, there are many things that can lead to disagreement. Look around you right now and see tremendous diversity. We have every type of personality. People at every level of spiritual maturity. People with different preferences in all sorts of things. Because of these differences ... conflict can arise. In our lesson today, we will talk about the need to welcome each other with understanding.

I. Romans 14.1: Welcome Each Other

A. Background

1. Jews/Gentiles were coming together with vastly different backgrounds.
2. Some Jews ... special diets and special days.
3. Some Gentiles ... concerned with meat being offered to idols.

B. Defining weak and strong

1. A weak believer is someone who has a certain preference that will not allow him to fully enjoy his freedom in Christ.
2. A strong believer is someone who understands the freedom he has in Christ.

C. Welcome each other

1. 14.1b: **Welcome**. Embrace intimately into your own love, communion, and fellowship.
2. 14.1c: *Don't **argue** about disputed matters.* Why is this so?

II. Romans 14.2-3: God Receives Both Weak and Strong

A. 14.2a - this is the strong brother.

B. 14.2b: this is the weak brother.

C. 14.3a: *the strong is not to **look down** on the weak.* i.e., to treat them with contempt.

D. 14.3b: *the weak is not to **judge** the strong.* No condemnation of those who exercise their liberty.

E. 14.3c: The reason: *God has **accepted** him.* God receives both the weak and the strong.

III. Romans 14.4: God Sustains Both Weak and Strong

A. 14.4a: Mind Your Own Business

1. Who are we to judge? Admonition: "mind your own business." It's not your problem.
2. 14.4b: What will be the result? If the brother belongs to the Lord ... *he will **stand**.*

B. Connect with Jude 24: *Now to him who is able to protect you from **stumbling** and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, ...*

IV. Romans 14.5-9: Both Weak and Strong Belong to the Lord

A. 14.5: *Let each one be fully **convinced** in his own mind.* don't train others to violate their conscience.

B. 14.6: Both have the same motive ... honor and thanks to the Lord.

C. 14.7-9: Both weak and strong *belong to the **Lord**.* Self-interest is not the concern.

V. Romans 14.10-12: The Lord will Judge Every Believer

A. 14.12: *So then, each of us will give an **account** of himself to God.*

B. Judgment has not been left to us ... it is in the hands of the Lord.

VI. As We Close...

A. Romans 14.1: *Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but don't argue about disputed matters.*

B. Many conflicts in the church come up over non-moral, non-essential things ... Criticism of each other must be stopped. We must let the Lord judge. It is far better that we learn to love each other. How committed are you in making unity happen?