

## **How To Create Unity In The Church**

**Unity in the church is about coming together to form something more significant. It recognizes that we're stronger together than we are as individuals.**

### **What Does The Bible Say?**

10 I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. (1 Corinthians 1:10 NLT)

### **What are that thought and purpose?**

**To make disciples through the Good News of Jesus Christ!**

### **How is that done?**

42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. (Acts 2:42 NLT)

**Studying the Bible, developing relationships, eating together, and praying together.**

11 For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. 12 Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter," or "I follow only Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:11-12 NLT)

**This church drifted from discipleship and emphasized the discipler.**

**Paul: Paul started the church in AD 50 to AD 52. Paul acknowledged that he was not a great speaker (2 Corinthians 11:6). But there were people there that came to know Christ because of him.**

**Apollos: Apollos arrived after Paul had left the church. He was not only intellectually brilliant, but he was also verbally eloquent (Acts 18:27-28). Greeks would have been enamored with his skills of logic and impressive rhetoric.**

**Cephas: Cephas (Peter's Aramaic version of the name), what is the most prominent among the original 12 disciples. He would've had a considerable influence among the Jewish Christian community.**

**The followers of only Christ: This group of Christ-followers may have taken their single devotion to Christ to an unhealthy extreme by rejecting all other church authorities, including those appointed by Christ, such as leaders in the church.**

3 for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? 4 When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world? (1 Corinthians 3:3–4 NLT)

**We, as Christians, are not to act petty.**

**How Can You Obey?**

For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

**The Good News should unite us in thought and purpose.**

**Discipleship is our goal.**

**When you glorify the messenger, you distract people from the message.**

**Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

**Notes:**

Today's Bible & Science comes from Ken Ham, The New Answers Book 1 (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), 149–161.

**Explore:**

Corinth was important in the missionary activity of the apostle Paul: he visited Corinth at least three times, founded Christian

assemblies there, and wrote at least four letters to Christians in Corinth. Corinth was a metropolitan city on the Mediterranean Sea with a population consisting of between 150,000 and 300,000 Roman citizens, and approximately 460,000 slaves. It was a city rich in culture and its citizens were known for worshiping many gods. Corinth had a reputation for vulgar materialism and immorality, boasting of being the home of Aphrodite, a Greek false goddess of love and prostitution. In the first century, when Paul wrote his letter, Corinth was known for its banking industry and incredible wealth. The church was established there some- time after Paul's visit to Athens, recorded in Acts 18. Some years later, the city of Corinth was de- stroyed because of its revolt against Rome and all the citizens were either killed or sold into slavery.

**Explore:**

Our struggle to maintain unity as believers illustrates that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare. Satan constantly tries to cause disunity in the church.

Our mission of making disciples and transferring the faith helps us maintain unity in the church.

**Explore:**

**How would you define the word unity?**

**Why is it important for churches to have unity?**

**What are some issues that cause division in churches?**

**What damage does it do when there is division in the body of Christ?**

**Upon what is our unity based as Christians?**

**How does focusing on our common mission lead to unity?**

**What is that mission?**

**With whom do you need to work for unity in your family or church?**

**Explore:**

Paul arrives in Corinth after his visit to Athens, and stays there for about eighteen months between ad 50 and 52. Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles how Paul lives with a Jewish couple, Aquila and Priscilla, and joins them in their business of tentmaking (Acts 18:1–3).

Paul founds the church in Corinth, and then moves on to Ephesus. In Ephesus he gets news from Corinth that various problems have arisen. It is to deal with these problems that he writes the letter we know as 1 Corinthians.

The church in Corinth is reflecting the society in which it is set. There is pride, selfishness, jealousy and immorality. There



are splits between different groups and there is rivalry between the leaders.

Some of the questions being raised are very practical—about sex and marriage, living among pagans and paying apostles. Others are more spiritual—understanding spiritual gifts, controlling Christian meetings and believing in the resurrection.

Paul takes each problem in turn and shows how the gospel applies to it. He has a brilliant mind and a warm heart. He gives guidelines for holiness in a pagan society. He puts spiritual gifts in their proper perspective. He teaches about leading worship meetings, and the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 576.

**Explore:**

What kind of unity is this to be? If the unity is to be organizational, our efforts to achieve and express it will be in one direction while, if it is to be a more subjective unity, our efforts will be expended differently.

One thing the church does not need to be is a great organizational unity. Whatever advantages or disadvantages may be found in massive organizational unity, that in itself obviously does not produce the results Christ prayed for. Nor does it solve the church's other problems. It has been tried and found wanting. In the early days of the church there was much growth but little organizational unity. Later, as the church came into governmental favor under Constantine and his successors, the visible church increasingly centralized until during the Middle Ages there was literally one united ecclesiastical body covering all Europe. Wherever one went—north, south, east or west—there was one united, interlacing church with the pope at its head. Was it a great age? Was there deep unity of faith? Was the

church strong? Was its morality high? Did men and women find themselves increasingly drawn to that faith and come to confess Jesus Christ as their own Savior and Lord? On the contrary, the world believed the opposite. Spurgeon wrote, “The world was persuaded that God had nothing to do with that great crushing, tyrannous, superstitious, ignorant thing which called itself Christianity; and thinking men became infidels, and it was the hardest possible thing to find a genuine intelligent believer north, south, east or west.”

Certainly there is something to be said for some form of outward, visible unity in some situations. But it is equally certain that this type of unity is not what we most need, nor is it that for which the Lord prayed.

Another type of unity that we do not need is conformity—that is, an approach to the church which would make everyone alike. Here we probably come closest to the error of the

evangelical church. If the liberal church for the most part strives for organizational unity—through the various councils of churches and denominational mergers—the evangelical church seems to strive for an identical pattern of appearance and behavior for its members. Jesus was not looking for that either. On the contrary, there should be diversity among Christians, diversity of personality, interests, lifestyle and even methods of Christian work and evangelism. Uniformity is dull, like rows of Wheaties boxes. Variety is exciting. We see it in the variety of nature and the actions of God.

But if the unity for which Jesus prayed is not an organizational unity or a unity achieved by conformity, what kind of unity is it? It is a unity analogous to the unity that exists in the Godhead. Jesus spoke of it like this: “That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us ... I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one” (Jn. 17:21, 23). The church is to have a spiritual

unity involving the basic orientation, desires and will of those participating. “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one” (1 Cor. 12:4–6).

This is not to say that all true believers actually enter into this unity as they should. Otherwise, why would Christ have prayed for it? Like the other marks of the church, unity is something given to the church but also something for which the body of true believers should strive.

James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive & Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 583–584.

### **Question 1 of 5**

Why does the Bible not use the word “dinosaur?”

## **Question 2 of 5**

Why are petroglyphs (drawings carved on rocks of dinosaur-like creatures) so important in showing that dinosaurs are not as old as evolutionists say they are?

## **Question 3 of 5**

Why is it difficult to maintain unity but seemingly easy to become divided?

## **Question 4 of 5**

What attitudes and actions lead to unity? To division?

## **Question 5 of 5**

How does a focus on Christ lead to unity in the church?