



## First Baptist Church Fair Oaks Ranch

**Ephesians 4:1-6** “I urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, accepting one another in love, diligently keeping the unity of the Spirit with the peace that binds us. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

There are few things more detrimental to a church than a lack of unity and oneness of spirit. This is the enemy’s easiest and most effective tool to destroy a church. Throughout the New Testament, Scripture reminds us to walk in a mindset of mutual harmony, sacrificial love and committed faith. Western Christianity, especially in America, brings a sense of ‘self-determination’ and rugged individualism that invades the call to sacrifice and self-denial. Rather than counting others as more important than self, we see our own wants as needs and preferences as priorities. With a dualistic idolatry of nostalgia (it was better when) and utopia (it would be better if...), believers tend to look for reasons to complain or compare rather than sacrifice and serve. The teaching of Ephesian 4, however, could not be clearer. As Christ followers we must walk in a worthy manner which includes striving for unity. The text even goes so far as to indicate we should pursue it diligently. In the same way we must vigilantly maintain biblical fidelity and theological accuracy in interpretation of scripture; we demonstrate a life filled with faith by constantly setting aside self for corporate unity and harmony.

This calling to walk in a worthy manner is a divine invitation to live in a way that reflects the character of Christ. Humility and gentleness are the first virtues. In a world that often values pride and assertiveness, humility is a counter-cultural and a counter-self virtue. Gentleness, closely related to humility, is about being kind and considerate, even in the face of provocation or simply not agreeing with the outcome of decisions. Unity, therefore, is not just a superficial agreement but a deep, spiritual bond that reflects the oneness of the body of Christ. Theologically, this unity is rooted in the belief that all believers are part of one body, with Christ as the head.

To walk in a worthy manner means to live in a way that reflects our identity in Christ. This involves embodying the virtues of humility, unity, and love in our daily lives. In practical terms, this will look like a church where everyone volunteers their time and resources to the ministry as a whole, where conflicts are resolved submission to proper authority, and where everyone considers themselves a valuable member of the family as they express these traits. Humility is not merely a passive trait but an active choice to place others above oneself. This mirrors the humility of Christ, who, despite being divine, took on human form and served others (Philippians 2:5-8). Humility in this sense is about recognizing our dependence on God and valuing others as equally important in the eyes of God. “Unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” is rooted in the belief that all believers are part of one body and one family, and that “oneness” is more important than getting my way. Love is the binding force that holds humility and unity together. Paul calls believers to bear with one another in love, which involves patience, forgiveness, and a willingness to support each other. This love is of course agape love; the selfless, sacrificial love that God shows to humanity. This love is exemplified in Jesus’ command to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35). It is through this love that the world will know we are His disciples and that the church will remain unified in spite of differences of opinions and priorities.

In 21st Century America, it is too easy to disagree and therefore justify disengaging. It has become “normal” to pack up our toys and go home when we don’t like the team we are on; however, if we are to



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accurately reflect Christ and His church, we must learn to put all the preferences aside and seek Christ first and foremost. It is only then that the scripture, “they will know that you are My disciples by your love” will finally be true.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, how easy it is to lose unity when I am inwardly focused. My priorities and preferences may be good and even valid, but never at the expense of unity within the church. Help me to strive for unity and to make it my priority to live in peace and mutual submission with my church family. In Jesus Name.