



First Baptist Church Fair Oaks Ranch

Romans 12:9-12 “Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. 10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.”

These verses serve as a reminder of the core values and convictions that should define how Christians interact with each other and with the world. In short staccato format, the text gives several instructions for believers to exhibit in order to have a healthy and harmonious church environment.

It begins with a call for genuine love, urging believers to love without hypocrisy. Genuine love is sincere, selfless, and reflective of Christ’s love for us. It goes beyond superficial niceties and playacted facades that look like love and instead seeks the true well-being of others. In a world where love is often conditional and self-serving, the church is called to be a beacon of authentic love. This genuine love also involves a righteous conviction to abhor what is evil and hold fast to what is good. This is more than a passive avoidance of wrong behavior but a sincere repulsion of it; especially when it is seen in one’s own heart. By rejecting evil and clinging to goodness, the church is set apart and sanctified. This moral clarity strengthens the bonds of unity, as members are united in their pursuit of what is good and pleasing to God.

Not only should agape love be the picture of the church, but phileo love as well. Verse 10 says “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” The exhortation to love one another with brotherly affection highlights the familial nature of the church. As brothers and sisters in Christ, believers are called to care for one another with the same devotion and tenderness found in a loving family. This brotherly affection fosters a sense of belonging and support, creating a safe and nurturing environment for spiritual growth. Moreover, Scripture encourages believers to outdo one another in showing honor. This call to honor others above ourselves counters the natural inclination towards self-promotion and pride. By valuing and respecting each other, the church cultivates a culture of humility and mutual appreciation. When members actively seek to honor one another, it strengthens the unity of the church and reflects the selfless love of Christ.

Next in this list of commands is to not be lazy in worship and service. This underscores the importance of genuine worship and passionate and dedicated service. The church thrives when its members are enthusiastic and committed to their spiritual duties. This fervent service is not driven by obligation but by a heartfelt desire to serve the Lord and advance His kingdom.

When believers are fervent in spirit, their enthusiasm becomes contagious, inspiring others to engage actively in the life of the church. This collective zeal propels the church forward, enabling it to fulfill its mission with energy and purpose. By serving the Lord with fervor, the church becomes a vibrant and dynamic community, making a significant impact on the world around it.

Last in this list of healthy habits is to rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. This triad of exhortations address the Christian response to life’s challenges. Rejoicing in hope reflects the joy that comes from the assurance of God’s promises. This hope is not wishful thinking but a confident expectation rooted in God’s faithfulness. It is a source of strength and encouragement, especially in difficult times. Patience in tribulation calls for steadfastness and endurance in the face of suffering. The church is not immune to trials, but it is called to persevere with faith and resilience. By supporting one



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another through hardships, the church demonstrates the power of unity and the sustaining grace of God. Finally, being constant in prayer emphasizes the importance of a vibrant prayer life. Persistent prayer keeps believers connected to God and to one another. It is through prayer that the church seeks divine guidance, strength, and unity. A praying church is a powerful church, equipped to face any challenge with confidence and grace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, each of these commands are easy to ready, yet remain elusive to perform. Unless you transform our hearts the church will continue to fall woefully short of this standard. By your grace, please grant us a heart to desire these traits of love, honor, zeal, hope, and endurance so we may reflect your grace to this world. In Jesus Name.