

Living in Unity
Study 7 – Ephesians – Living In Christ and the World
Ephesians 4:1-16

Message Mate

- God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is perfect unity, three persons co-existing in perfect harmony, each different but together expressing perfect love and oneness. This is our benchmark of Christian unity. Christian unity is oneness in Christ (or conversely, the state of being undivided). Oneness in Christ is with Christ as the head and the church as His body. Ephesians 4:3 shows us that we are to make every effort to keep unity, which is given by the Holy Spirit and comes through the bond of peace.
- Five points about unity: Unity:
 - is exemplified in God, as the Trinity
 - occurs when there are love, grace and truth
 - comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and churches, it can be facilitated but not forced by people
 - is not uniformity
 - is not forcing people together.
- Each follower of Jesus can facilitate unity. We are called to be humble, gentle, patient and bear with one another in love (v2). Unity requires intentional effort of the individual and requires the work of the Holy Spirit in each individual, receiving grace as Christ gives it (v7). This grace includes the gifts of the Spirit (v 8, Rom 12:6) being used to intentionally foster unity, growth and maturity of the church.
- The church can grow in unity. Jesus Christ gives callings and giftings to leaders in the church, including the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (v11). These roles are given to equip His people because every follower is called to be increasingly equipped so that they can serve Christ and in doing so build up the body of Christ (v12). This is God's intention for each of us and the church, to work towards unity, knowing Christ more and maturing to become more like Him (v13).
- Two influences that bring disunity can be teaching that is not grounded in the Word of God and/or how to apply it appropriately, and people who deceitfully scheme division in the church (v14). However, as we put active effort into living as a true loving example of Jesus, we grow to become the mature body of Christ (v15). As each part in the body works as God created it to, then it grows and functions as God intended (v16). This applies to the church in that if each of us grows and functions as God intended, the body can function in unity and maturity as God intended.
- May we become a church where each person uses their gifts to facilitate unity. May we become one body in unity and maturity as the body of Christ.

Some Questions to Consider

1. If you could be any bone in the body, which one would it be? Why? Read Ephesians 4:16 and discuss this image of the church functioning in unity and maturity.
2. Unity is exemplified in God. Read Ephesians 4:4,5 and discuss the significance of each of Spirit, Lord (Jesus Christ) and Father being included in the seven aspects that describe oneness. Why is the Trinity the perfect example of oneness?
3. Read Galatians 3:28 and discuss why unity is not uniformity, particularly in the first century church, and what that looks like for churches today, and for the Church (meaning body of all believers) to be one. Discuss the beauty of diversity of different churches you know in Toowoomba and the concept of how each can contribute to the beauty of the church in Toowoomba.
4. Christ intended that people in the church would be equipped for works of service to build up the church so that the church will be built up. Briefly share one gift or skill you have and where you are, or could use it to serve and build up the church. (This is not to put pressure on people to serve in a season where that is not practical, but to encourage people to think of opportunities they might aspire to and aim towards).
5. In Ephesians 4:15, the term “truth in love” is best translated as “truthing in love” where truth is a verb (a doing word). One of our values at Rangeville is, “Living Authentically” which “means that our character and conduct should be an authentic example of Jesus Christ to those around us”. Discuss one way where you are able to speak truth or act truth as an authentic example of Jesus to those around you.

Pray –

Pray with thanks for the beautiful example of perfect unity given to use through God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pray using the following as the outline:

“May we become a church where each person uses their gifts to facilitate unity. May we become one body in unity and maturity as the body of Christ.”