

PRECEPT

EPHESIANS 4:1-6

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

PROMISE

We are meant to live in community with other believers and to actively pursue unity within that community. Living in a “manner worthy” of our calling makes corporate unity a more likely outcome. Unfortunately, the church often seems to be less concerned with actively pursuing true unity (not to be confused with ignoring wrong to avoid conflict) and more prone to church splits and avoiding church for a more individual-centric faith apart from Christian community. After Paul has told us what God has done in Christ, a major transition happens here in chapter 4. The focus has now switched to how the believer lives in response to all that God has done. We should walk “worthy” of our calling. This is characterized by humility, love, patience, and gentleness in how we live in community with one another. We are called to “the unity of the Spirit” because we all share one “body,” one hope, one Saviour, one faith.

Now, how can we attain unity in a Christian community? How can we make every effort to keep the unity in our church? How can we become contributors and not consumers? How can we make church a community, not a commodity? In the Bible, “one another” was used 100 times in 94 New Testament verses. 60% of it were written by Paul and 47% are instructions to the followers of Jesus. This data shows that Jesus, Paul, and the rest of the apostles clearly understand that there is no lone-ranger Christian. We cannot survive Christianity alone and isolating ourselves is never a good idea. We need a community and we are commanded to be part of a Christian community. Here are some of the ways we can be contributors rather than consumers:

Honour one another above yourselves. (Ro 12:10)

Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Php 2:3)

Serve one another (Ga 5:13)

Live in harmony with one another (Ro 12:16)

Submit to one another (Ep 5:21)

Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Pe 5:5)

Love one another (Jn 13:34, 15:12, 17; Ro 13:8; 1 Th 3:12, 4:9; 1 Pe 1:22; 1 Jn 3:11, 4:7, 11; 2 Jn 5)

Serve one another humbly in love (Ga 5:13)

Be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ep 4:2)

Be devoted to one another in love (Ro 12:10)

Spiritual maturity is formed in a Christian community, the local Church. The church is filled with “character builders,” and every one of us has been a sanctifying force for one of our brothers or sisters in Christ as they have learned to deal with our flaws and sins. It’s important to point out that abuse is a different matter; we must be careful not to minimize abusive behaviour by those in our churches, just as we wouldn’t tolerate our children being bullied and abused in their school settings. For most church challenges, however, we can give thanks to God for those he has put in our collective body to move us closer to him. Let us approach those challenging church relationships with humility and a desire to understand our fellow believers, which results to God’s glory.

PRACTICE

1. Christian Community. Why is it important to be in a community with other believers?

2. Safe Place. Does church feel like a safe place to you? How can you help create a church culture where others will feel comfortable being vulnerable with their struggles and hurts?

3. Character Builders. How does living in a community with people who annoy, challenge, or irritate us help us grow in maturity? How can you learn to appreciate these “character builders” in your life?

PRAYER

I. Life Kids

- Pray that the teachers will influence the children in God’s ways. Pray for strength for all volunteers.

II. Life Worship

- Pray for more men and women who have a heart for worship to lead us during worship services.

III. Life Link

- May God’s Spirit continue to fill them with hospitality and grace as they meet people at the door each week.

IV. Life Sports

- Pray for this ministry to continue to be an avenue for us to invite more souls to church and ultimately to Christ.

V. Volunteers

- Pray for more volunteers who are committed to the Kingdom work.

VI. Missionaries

- Pray that God may protect all of our missionaries by His sovereign will and mighty hand.

VII. Discipleship

- Pray that we will all yield to our calling to share the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.