

What are the gifts of grace that you think you have? You may need to discuss with your cell leader about your gifts. Do you think you have used them fully?

The ascended Christ who now is in position to rule over all and give gifts to the Church that enables it to function. These gifts are certain gifted people. What gifted people are mentioned in vv. 9-11? What are the purposes (vv. 12-13) and results of these gifts (vv. 14-15)?

Jesus Christ is both the One into whom we grow (v. 15) and the One out of whom we grow as a whole church. The whole body grows as each part carries out its proper function in truth and love.

Assess your own commitment to truth and love in the last six months.

Pray for our entire church community to commit ourselves to truth and love so that there is both individual and corporate growth into greater likeness of Christ.

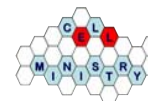
SUMMARY

The Church is a diverse body of many different people who must give attention to preserving their unity and contribute to body growth by exercising their gifts in the service of Christ. How much do you love the body of Christ for whom Christ laid down His own life? Be a good steward of His grace and fulfill your role in His body. Live the truth in love.

Ephesians

Week 7

[Cell-group Discussion]



Ephesians 4 : 1 - 16

Live Worthy of Your Call Focused on Unity

The text stresses the importance of walking in unity. God will not enforce unity in answer to prayer. Believers have a responsibility to obey Him as well. God has given different gifts to the Church and wants the members to work together as parts of one body. In verse 1, Paul challenges the Ephesians to walk worthily of their calling from his position of honor as a prisoner of the Lord. By referring to himself as the Lord's prisoner, Paul reminded his readers of his authority to urge them to live this way. Paul was in prison because he had followed God's will faithfully. To walk worthily means to harmonize one's conduct with his or her calling. Calling here refers to God's calling to live in unity as Jews and Gentiles in the Church (2:13-16). To walk worthily then would involve behaving in a united way, living in unity with Jewish brethren if one was a Gentile and vice-versa in the Church.

What are the three virtues that contribute to unity in the Church (v. 2)? What attribute keeps the different kinds of diverse groups in the Church together? (v. 3)

Indicate the percentages in the blanks below how you regularly you apply these qualities:

Humble _____ %

Gentle _____ %

Patience _____ %

Corporate peacefully _____ %

What prevents you from regular application of these qualities?

Unity is motivated by Theological Oneness

Verses 4-6 highlights the seven elements of unity that unite believers in the Church: "There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." Believers should remember them when tempted to break unity. Again all three members of the Trinity are in view and play a part in the process. How can unity be established? It does not need to be established, for it already exists, given by God. It needs to be valued and maintained. Christ is not divided. This unity established by God needs to be valued and maintained. Our concern is not for some organizational unity. Rather, the concern is unity in Christ, which carries with it an assumption of the biblical message about Christ as crucified and risen Lord. Christians do not need to agree on everything to have unity; we need to live the unity of a common commitment to Christ. Unity in essentials, liberty in incidentals, and in all things charity [love]. This mission of the Church is crippled by the division among various groups. Unless we evidence unity, our witness does not deserve to be heard.

Assess yourself in relation to showing concern for and getting to know other church members that will promote unity of the body in the last six months. Do you consider yourself too busy with living this life for the sake of money, family, career etc. that you have neglected the welfare of your brethren in COR/your cell group?

Each Person has received Grace to build up Christ's Body

Verse 7 emphasizes that whereas each believer has received grace (unmerited favor and divine enablement) from God, God does not give each Christian the same measure of grace, the ability to serve God. Though Jews and Gentiles both receive enabling grace from God, God gives this ability to differently individuals differently. Gifts of grace are tools to build the Church. They are not toys to play with. If gifts are not used in love, they become weapons to fight with (1 Cor. 12-14). In verse 8, Paul paraphrases Ps. 68:18 to confirm his statement that God gives gifts of grace to people. A military victor has the right to give gifts to those identified with him. Christ, the victor over sinful people, has the right to give those people to the Church as gifts.