

## BELIEVERS NEED TO BELONG TO THE CHURCH

EPHESIANS 4:1-13

*“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”* Eph. 4:1 (NIV)

*“And so I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are My disciples.”* John 13:34-35 (TLB)

*“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”* Eph. 4:2 (NIV)

What makes a church a great church? Unity

What can I do to make Grace a great church?

### 1. Develop three Attitudes

- Humility:
- Gentleness (Moses in Num. 12:3 – Jesus in Matt. 11:29):
- Patience:

*“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”* Eph. 4:3 (NIV)

*“God made peace through the blood of Christ’s death on the cross.”* Col. 1:20 (NCV)

*“Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all... Our bodies have many parts, but the many parts make up only one body when they are all put together. So it is with the ‘body’ of Christ.”*  
1 Cor. 12:12 (TLB)

*“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.”* Eph. 4:4-6 (NIV)

*“I want to encourage you to fight hard for the faith that was given the holy people of God once and for all time.”*  
Jude 1:3 (NCV)

### 2. Determine to work at it.

1. The effort is mine
2. The unity is the Spirit’s
3. The bond of peace is the cross

### 3. Discover the need for unity in purpose and diversity in personalities.

### 4. Dedicate yourself to God's truth

There are 7 basic spiritual realities that unite all believers

One Body

One Spirit

One Hope

One Lord

One Faith

One Baptism

One God

When you are tempted to “disunity” remember these things:

One Body: Whatever hurts them, hurts me.

One Spirit: The Spirit within us agrees.

One Hope: We’re going to spend eternity together.

One Lord: Jesus thought of us both as He died on the cross.

One Faith: We agree on THE MOST important things.

One Baptism: We are marked by God as believers.

One God: We are both creative expressions of a loving God.

And don’t forget: God is over all... through all... in all. Use this verse as a way to visualize where God is in this relationship

*“Barnabas wanted to take John... but Paul did not think it wise to take him... They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.” Acts 15:37-39 (NIV)*

*“This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem...” Acts 15:2 (NIV)*

*“Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly... Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth.” 2 Tim. 2:16-18 (NIV)*

*“I ask Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you, my faithful friend, to help these women.” Phil. 4:3 (NCV)*

*“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” Eph. 4:7 (NIV)*

*“This is why it says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to men.’ What does “He ascended” mean except that He also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.” Eph. 4:8-10 (NIV)*

Does this mean I have to always agree with every other believer?

Of course not.

How should we handle it when believers see things differently?

Here are some examples:

- Paul and Barnabas (\*Acts 15:37) – the answer is sometimes to each do what God has given to your hearts to do.
- Jews and Gentiles (Acts 15:2) – the answer is sometimes to have a formal meeting to discover your common ground.
- Paul and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:16-18) – the answer is sometimes to recognize that another is wandering from the faith... and to cut off the relationship.

Notice: One... one... one... EACH ONE.

*“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.” Eph. 4:11 (NIV)*

*“to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. “ Eph. 4:12 (NIV)*

*“until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:13 (NIV)*

### **The Grace Membership Covenant:**

1. I will protect the unity of my church
  - ... By acting in love toward other members
  - ... By refusing to gossip
  - ... By following the leaders
2. I will share the responsibility of my church
  - ... By praying for its growth
  - ... By inviting the unchurched to attend
  - ... By warmly welcoming those who visit
3. I will serve the ministry of my church
  - ... By discovering my gifts and talents
  - ... By being equipped to serve by my pastors
  - ... By developing a servant's heart.
4. I will support the testimony of my church
  - ... By attending faithfully
  - ... By living a godly life
  - ... By giving regularly