

# The Church



Part ten: It's not about me; it's about us

## Getting started

1. In any group (like a family, classroom, workplace, athletic team, etc.), people are part of something bigger than themselves. What happens if individuals only think about themselves?

## Unity in the church

**Colossians 3:11-15** Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

2. Unity in God's church comes from valuing each other as equals, bearing with each other, and forgiving each other. How do those emphases promote unity? How does a lack of those emphases promote disunity?

## The strong & the weak

### Romans 14:1-15:9

<sup>1</sup> Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. <sup>2</sup> One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup> One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. <sup>6</sup> Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. <sup>8</sup> If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'"

<sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. <sup>14</sup> I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. <sup>15</sup> If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, <sup>18</sup> because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

<sup>19</sup> Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

<sup>20</sup> Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. <sup>21</sup> It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

<sup>22</sup> So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. <sup>23</sup> But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

<sup>1</sup> We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

<sup>2</sup> Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." <sup>4</sup> For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

<sup>5</sup> May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, <sup>6</sup> so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. <sup>8</sup> For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed <sup>9</sup> and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

3. There are those who are weak (less mature) in faith, and those who are strong (more mature) in faith. Both are equal in Christ. Yet, according to the Bible passage above, who ought to go the extra mile to accommodate for whom? And why?
4. What might it look like for the strong in faith “to make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification” in the following scenarios?
  - A fellow believer has a very basic grasp of Bible history and doctrine.
  - A fellow believer has different political leanings.
  - A new member of St. Mark’s didn’t grow up attending church and the Sunday morning experience is all very new and different.
  - A young, single mom finds it nearly impossible to come to church with her kids.
  - Gen Z men and women often feel like they don’t have a place in the church and struggle to see how it connects with their daily living.
  - Others?
5. Agree or disagree: You don’t have to worry about “getting it right” when trying to make every effort for others. The whole point is that you see the other person, show you care, and work toward peace and mutual edification.

## **Building each other up**

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24** “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** Encourage one another and build each other up.

6. Evaluate: If we always remember, “It’s not about me; it’s about us,” we’ll be on the right path of building each other up as a church.

## **Wrapping up**

7. Where would you like to see continued growth in: “It’s not about me; it’s about us”—individually and for our church at St. Mark’s?