

The Family of God Matters

Your church family matters

Unity is probably the strongest **family trait** described in the bible.

In fact the word “unity” or “being unified” **doesn't seem strong enough to God** so He uses the word **ONENESS**.

Ephesians 5 is awesome and it has a dual application of truth for marriage and your family and the church of God, our family.

5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

5:30-32 for we are members of his body. **31** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be **united** to his wife, and the **two will become one** flesh.” **32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.**

- **Unity Matters in the marriage and the family.**
- **Unity Matters in the church, which is God's family.**

The Profound Mystery is how our covenant bond with Christ Jesus is as strong as the bond of marriage.

Another Profound Mystery is the supernatural family belonging among members of His church.

- **NEW** Ephesians 2:19 ESV So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God.**
- This means we are brothers and sisters!
 - The phrase **“brothers and sisters”** search **showed up 150 times in the NT alone.**
- Stand Up --- Look around you. make eye contact.
 - Tell some men – *Hey you are not a stranger, you are my brother!*
 - Find some women – *Hey you are not a stranger, you are my sister!*

I feel a **sense of urgency** for us to **lean into the family of God** in this hour.

If it is true, **we are not strangers** but **brothers and sisters**, then we have to start **Working on out Unity!**

WHY? because **we are bent toward Drama!** Some of us are more drama than others, **but we are all Drama!**

haircut last week and there was a lady in the room spewing to another person about her church drama. This person did that, and that person said this, and the **pastor does nothing about it** and the pastor's kids... oh boy let me tell about them... And, **all he cares about is money anyhow...** and the rich people get special treatment.

I am just cringing because I know some of these people and **she doesn't know me.**

My barber guy is looking at me with his eyes wide open and then he says to the lady... **Hey I want you to meet this guy.** This is Ron he is the lead pastor of Christian Life Church.

She was stunned and started stuttering... then she says to me! **Well what do you think about Joel Osteen!** All he cares about is money and **have you seen his wife...**

Drama, drama, drama... before I could even answer her, she said well, thank you... I got to go!

Drama causes Division and division weakens the family:

- Division isolates
- Division brings confusion
- Division mutates like cancer in a body
- Division misrepresents the love of Christ to a world that is desperately in need of love.

Why would anybody want to be a part of a church family that is filled with drama? They already have enough of that in their own family, at work, in their kids school, on the ball field...

Unity in the Family of God was **the dream of Christ**.

John 17:20-21 NLT "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. **21 I pray that they will all be one**, just as you and I **are one**—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so **that the world will believe** you sent me.

The way we Love God and Lean into one another testifies to unbelievers that Jesus Christ has been sent to them from above.

The shower for the Muslim family that decided to keep their baby.

Apostolic Writers made Unity in the Family of God was a priority!
(Romans 15; Colossians 3; Ephesians 2,3, & 4; Philippians 2)

The Early Church was known for its unity and devotion to one another.

- Opened their houses
- Shared their resources
- Lived for the common good.

In fact when individuals came to Christ, often times they were cut off from the biological families and in turn they were adopted into the families of God.

They really became brothers and sisters.

Today we see a very individualistic emphasis in Christianity.

- The isolation of the pandemic has diminished the priority of church people to gather with the church family. Down by 30% - 40% post covid.
- The early church met weekly in homes and at the temple courts in larger gatherings.
 - Small and large gatherings weekly.
 - They pursued God corporately.
 - Prayed together
 - Fasted together
 - Listened to the apostle's teachings together.
 - Gave toward special projects of need together

They leaned in toward one another.

Today many people see church as an **event to attend** and not as a **family where they can belong**.

Biblical Unity is not a manufactured unity. Family unity is an innate gift imparted to us by God

Lean into the Family of God

I discovered something in **Colossians 3** during my prep for our Family Matters series that has stayed with me for weeks.

In **Col 3:18-22 (NLT)** He gives us instructions for **life within our natural family**.

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. **19** Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. **20** Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. **21** Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

Look at prior context **v.12 – 16** where he gives us instructions for **life within our spiritual family**.

Col 3:12-16 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must **clothe yourselves** with tenderhearted **mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience**. **13** Make **allowance for each other's fault** and **forgive anyone who offends** you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. **14** Above all, **clothe yourselves with love**, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the **peace** that comes from Christ **rule in your hearts**. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. **16** Let the **message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives**. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

The Holy Spirit gives a list healthy family traits that brings us into unity and overcomes division.

Let's discover these traits and apply them in our church family relationships.

Five Attitudes that Matter (v.12)

Attitudes do Matter!

A pastor friend of my applied these attitudes in the congregation in real everyday language.

Mercy

"I feel your pain"

- I want you to **take another look around you**, I just wonder **how many people sitting next to you are hurting?**
- I wonder **what would church be like if we all came to minister to one another** instead of merely attending the event?
 - Asking ourselves **Who is sitting around me? what are their names? Do they feel loved?**

clothe yourself with...

Kindness

"you get my smile"

- When someone pull up in the church and slides **in the parking spot in front of you** what do they get from you? Do they get your smile?
 - Someone said that **a warm smile is the universal language of kindness**.

Humility

"I am here to serve you; your desires matter more than mine"

- **Humility did not exist much in the world much before Christianity**. Humility was seen as a **weakness** and **not a strength**.

- The further we are removed from the Christian ethic in society, the more rare, humility has become.
 - Christ Jesus came with the attitude to serve and not be served.

• Unity is impossible without humility!

Phil. 2:3-5 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Gentleness

"I am not here to fight"

- The world is filled with anger and people are ready to fight.
- Illustration: my uncle Arnold always wanted to fight. I remember as a kid we had to walk home a few miles from baseball practice. And we passed through a bad part of town. He was older and he told me we better be ready to fight. If they come at us... I'll take the biggest one you take the smaller one. He started coaching me up. I'm 10 years old and im walking down the street with my fist clinched and my jaw set... ready to fight. Looking at everybody on the street as an enemy. Sizing up them all. Nobody wanted to fight us. they hardly looked at us.
 - Relax your fist, stop sizing people up, you are not her to fight... be gentle.

Patience

"I am not giving up that easily"

- At the first sign of conflict people quit.
- There are hundreds of people who are active members of this church family. But I have seen hundreds of former church members become impatient with others and leave.

How do you stay committed when conflict arises...

(v.13 -14) 13 Make allowance for each other's fault and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Three Unifying Actions that Matter

Intentional Actions Matter!

Give people some space to make mistakes.

"Make allowance for each other's faults..."

If you are going to flow in a family, you will have to make allowance for each other's faults. Have you even noticed that?

- Ever gone on a family vacation with grown kids and grandkids?
 - Im up early... Kerri's like don't wake us up! I wont I'm so quite! You nothing quite! Dad! You walk too loud, you clang the dishes, I have even been told I chew my food to loud.
 - You are so annoying! You are annoying too! And your dog is annoying. People and their pets are annoying.

- Look at someone around you and tell them, I will make allowance for your faults. Will you extend that grace to me?

Forgive anyone who offends you.

v13 “forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others

- Sometimes people’s annoying traits manifest in real offensive actions.
 - I have seen people get offended over business deals in the church that cost them money.
 - I have seen people get offended over broken promises or a broken confidence.
 - I have seen people get offended over their teenagers drama in the youth ministry.
 - Gossiped about... not included... took a joke the wrong way... felt racially wounded... etc...
- Remind yourself that Jesus has forgiven us of some hideous sins... we must forgive others.
 - Real forgiveness means you don’t bring it up anymore when it surfaces in your heart.
 - Thank God, He doesn’t keep bringing up our past forgiven sins!

To lean into your church family...

Clothe yourself with Love.

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.”

The Atmosphere that Matters (v.15,16)

The Atmosphere in Church Gatherings Matter

Let peace rule here.

“And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace.” What rules your heart?

- Forgiveness takes one, reconciliation takes two.
- If a person won’t come to peace... don’t let their anger rule your heart... let peace rule you!

v. 16 NIV Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Let the message Jesus brings fill this household.

The original Greek word for dwell is “enoikeo” (ee nick k o) which literally means “be at home”

Let the full essence of Christ consume the community. Let His essence of Jesus fill the environment.

When the teachings of Christ and the power of the new life dwells among us it produces a richness that money cannot buy!

Authentic, loving life-long relationships matter more than money... When its all gone, its your family that matters.

This Fall Season, Learn how to Lean into the Family of God!