

BE UNIFIED

UNITY.....THE STATE OF BEING UNITED OR JOINED AS A WHOLE.
A FAMILY, TRIBE, OR A BODY SERVING ONE PURPOSE TOGETHER
EACH ONE BRINGS SOMETHING DIFFERENT, BUT ALL ARE VALUABLE
AND EFFECTIVE.

SO MANY OF US HAVE EXPERIENCED A LIFE COMPLETELY OPPOSITE
OF THAT. EVERY PERSON FOR THEMSELVES, BECAUSE AFTER ALL,
NOBODY REALLY CARES ABOUT ANYTHING BUT THEMSELVES
ANYWAY. SOUND FAMILIAR?

I HAVE BEEN SO EXTREMELY SELFISH MY WHOLE LIFE, IT'S
EMBARRASSING TO ADMIT BUT IT'S TRUE

IT HAS BEEN AN ONGOING JOURNEY FOR ME MASTERING THE ART OF
UNITY

I'VE FOUND OUT OVER MANY YEARS THAT BEING TEACHABLE,
HUMBLE, AND WILLING TO GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR A COMMON
GOAL WITH OTHERS IS SO MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN BEING A
SOLO ARTIST

MANY OF US HAVE HAD BAD EXPERIENCES WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS,
AND THE CHURCH. THIS MAKES IT VERY HARD FOR US TO TRUST
PEOPLE AND WE'D JUST RATHER SLUG IT OUT ALONE

"YEAH, I READ MY BIBLE...I DON'T NEED TO ACTUALLY GO TO
CHURCH TO LOVE JESUS, I AM THE CHURCH. BESIDES, I DON'T
REALLY LIKE PEOPLE"

THESE STATEMENTS, THOUGH TRUE AT SOME LEVEL, ARE THE
REASON PEOPLE AREN'T REALLY GROWING IN THEIR FAITH AND
GETTING TO EXPERIENCE THE FULLNESS OF WHAT BEING A CHRIST
FOLLOWER OR A CHRISTIAN IS.

PERSON TO PERSON RELATIONSHIP IS THE VERY HEART OF THE
DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

IF YOU THINK FAITH IS PURLEY PRIVATE, A “ME AND JESUS” KINDA THING, YOU ARE FOOLING YOURSELF
“WHO SAYS YOU NEED TO GO TO CHURCH TO BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN?”
WELL, GOD SAYS SO.

TWO METAPHORS ARE GIVEN WHEN REFFERING TO THE REDEEMED PEOPLE OF GOD:

THE BODY:

WHERE ALL THE PARTS GREAT AND SMALL WORK TOGETHER AND MUST FUNCTION WELL FOR THE BODY TO BE WHOLE

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 *New King James Version (NKJV)*

Unity and Diversity in One Body

¹²For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into^{1a} one Spirit. ¹⁴For in fact the body is not one member but many.

FAMILY:

WE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

2 Corinthians 6:18 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁸ And,

“I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.”^{1a}

THE COMMUNITY OF GOD’S PEOPLE, HIS FAMILY....ARE TO BE AN INTIMATE GROUP OF PEOPLE DOING LIFE IN RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER...JUST AS THE PARTS OF THE BODY OPERATE BY BEING CONNECTED TO THE BODY ITSELF

JESUS BEING THE HEAD OF THE BODY AND THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

Hebrews 10:24-25 New International Version (NIV)

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

IT IS GOOD FOR US TO GET TOGETHER AND FILL EACH OTHERS TANKS
SO WE CAN POUR IT OUT TO THE WORLD

JESUS WAS VERY CLEAR WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:18-20 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

THIS IS OUR COMMON GOAL, LIKE THE DISCIPLES THEN, WE MUST FIRST
LEARN TO BE UNIFIED WITH EACH OTHER BEFORE WE CAN APPROPRIATLY
LOVE PEOPLE INTO UNITY WITH US

THE FOCUS OF COURSE ALWAYS BEING JESUS CHRIST

THE CHURCH IS THE BEST PLACE TO GROW AS A CHRISTIAN

AFTER ALL, YOUR AROUND PEOPLE THAT UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF
FORGIVNESS AND GRACE RIGHT?

IT BETTER BE THAT WAY

IF NOT, WE ARE JUST PLAYING SOME RELIGIOUS GAME. YUCK!

WE DON'T WANT TO PLAY CHURCH, WE WANT TO BE TRUE LOVERS OF
GOD AND CARRY THE LIKENESS OF OUR SAVIOR
KEEPING IT REAL ALONG THE JOURNEY

THE WORD CHURCH IN THE GREEK EKKLESIA (EKK-KLAY-SEE-AH)
MEANING "CALLED OUT"

WE HAVE BEEN CALLED OUT FROM THIS WORLD AND INTO THE KINGDOM
OF GOD. WE ARE UNITED AS A FAMILY, THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
AND OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

JUST LIKE ANY OTHER FAMILY, WE WILL HAVE ISSUES, WE WILL HAVE
TRIALS, WE WILL HAVE VICTORIES, WE WILL HAVE SADNESS, AND WE WILL
HAVE JOY....TOGETHER

Matthew 16:13-18 *New International Version (NIV)*

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^(a) and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^(b) will not overcome it.

PETER WAS SO FLAWED, YET JESUS SAID HE WOULD BUILD HIS CHURCH
WITH HIM

THROUGHOUT HISTORY WE HAVE SEEN NATIONS AND KINGDOMS RISE AND FALL, BUT THE CHURCH STILL STANDS. WHY? BECAUSE OUR LEADER AND PURPOSE ARE ETERNAL

OUR PURPOSE FOR MEETING TOGETHER IS NOT TO BE A SOCIAL CLUB, EVEN THOUGH IT'S FUN TO HANG OUT WITH YOU.

THIS COMMUNITY, HIS PLACE WESTMINSTER, IS WHERE WE GET TO GROW IN GOD TOGETHER, LEARN HOW TO DO LIFE ON LIFE'S TERMS TOGETHER, LEARN HOW TO DO RELATIONSHIPS TOGETHER. WE LEARN HOW TO LOVE, FORGIVE, GIVE GRACE, EXERCISE THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN US, AND THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT..TOGETHER

SHARE ABOUT HOW HIS PLACE HAS CHANGED YOUR LIFE

WE HAVE SUCH A LARGE EXTENDED FAMILY AS WELL, ALL OVER THE WORLD

Ephesians 3:6 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

WE ARE MANY AND WE SHARE EQUALLY IN THE PROMISES OF GOD PROVIDED IN CHRIST JESUS

Ephesians 3:10-12 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

WE REPRESENT THE MANY FOLDS OF THE WISDOM OF GOD.. TOGETHER !!!

YES WE ARE DIFFERENT BUT WE SHARE THE SAME SPIRIT IT HAS BEEN THAT WAY SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

Acts 2:5-12 New International Version (NIV)

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^a ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

EVERYONE WAS DIFFERENT WITH ALL OF THEIR "STUFF" DIFFERENT CULTURES AND BACKGROUNDS...JUST LIKE US

THEY HAD TO LEARN HOW TO BE UNIFIED AS WELL

YOU SEE, WHEN YOUR MAIN PURPOSE IS TO WORSHIP AND HONOR GOD WITH YOUR LIFE, CHURCH REALLY BECOMES A WEEKLY FAMILY REUNION, BUT AT THIS FAMILY REUNION, WE FOCUS ON JESUS

YES WE ARE FLAWED, YES WE SIN, BUT WE SHARPEN EACH OTHER, HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE, PRAY FOR EACH OTHER, HOLD EACH OTHER UP, AND SHARE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GOD IS NOT DONE WITH US YET

PAUL SAID IT SO WELL:

Philippians 1:4-6 New International Version (NIV)

⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

THANK YOU JESUS!!

YOU SEE, THERE IS NO NEED FOR PRIDE OR LOW SELF ESTEEM IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE NOT VALUABLE TO THIS CHURCH, I'M ASSURING YOU THAT YOU ARE

1 Corinthians 12:15-20 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

GOD FORBID ANYONE THINK THEY ARE ALL THAT AND A BAG OF CHIPS, PRIDE HAS NO PLACE IN THE BODY EITHER

1 Corinthians 12:21-27 *New International Version (NIV)*

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME AND COMMITMENT, OUR REALATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER ARE NO DIFFERENT

TO REAP THE BENEFIT OF COMMUNITY YOU NEED TO SHOW UP AND
PITCH IN, AND HEY.....BE FRIENDLY

YOU WILL BE LESSED

I'LL CLOSE WITH THIS:

JESUS TELLS US IN

John 13:34-35 *New International Version (NIV)*

³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

YOU CAN'T LEARN HOW TO LOVE FROM A DISTANCE, IT'S UP CLOSE
AND PERSONAL, LIKE BEING PARTS OF A BODY....ALWAYS MAKING
ROOM FOR MORE FAMILY AND NEW PARTS