

I Am a Church Member - Session 2

In our last session, we learned committed to being FUNCTIONING church members. This is an idea of membership which has two requirements: giving abundantly and serving without hesitation. There is no question if we should be serving our church, it is about discovering our unique role in helping the body of Christ be all that it can be.

Much like the sports teams we love, there is a teamwork effort that is necessary in order for the church to function at optimal capability. It is not the size or talent that is ultimately important for success, it is how these teams work together. In order for the church to be all God has created it to be, we have to operate in unity. In fact, God demands of us to be a unifying presence in the church.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (New Living Translation)

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. ² Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. ³ Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

I Will Be a UNIFYING Church Member

→ *We Should Be Known By Our Love for One Another (Ephesians 4:2)*

- ◆ The Neon Sign of Love: John 13:35
- ◆ The Vital Sign of Unity: Ephesians 1:15-16
- ◆ "You are to be a source of unity...that doesn't mean you agree with everyone all the time, [but] you are willing to sacrifice your own preferences to keep unity in your church." - Rainer, p 23-24

→ *Gossip and Negative Talk (Ephesians 4:2-3)*

- ◆ Gossip: An Unrighteous Disease: Romans 1:29-31, James 3:6
- ◆ The Church Member's Guide to Handling Gossip: 1 Peter 3:10
 - Don't be a source of gossip.
 - Gently rebuke those that seek to share gossip.

→ *Forgiveness and Unity (Ephesians 4:3)*

- ◆ Broken Lines of Communication: Matthew 6:14-15
- ◆ Forgiveness Maintains Unity: Colossians 3:12-14
- ◆ Steps to Forgiveness: Matthew 18:15-17; Matthew 5:23-24
- ◆ Because Christ Forgave: Rainer, pg 28-9

In Colossians 3, Paul says that "love is the perfect bond in unity." He talked in depth about love in 1 Corinthians 13 as he addressed the unity issues in Corinth. Reading this chapter, what does this mean for our church today?

1 Corinthians 13 (NIV)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Session 2 Pledge :

I am a church member.

I will seek to be a source of unity in my church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff, or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip and dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make it so do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.

Sign & Date