

# Biblical Unity

United Out of Diversity



## PRINCIPLES THAT MAINTAIN UNITY

Christians find their unity in their connection with Christ as they come into His one body. Despite all their differences there is, or should be, a Spirit of oneness and a continuing desire for harmony and peace among us (**Ephesians 4:3**). We maintain what unity we have as we attempt to deepen that unity through constant effort on the part of all. The following are some principles that I believe are critical to the maintenance and maturing of unity among us.

1. One's attitude towards the Bible is critical. Do we have the attitude, "Let's go back to the Bible. Let's see what God's Word says about the matter." Oneness of God's people in any given congregation does not consist in total agreement in everything, but in an attitude of humble submission to the Word of God, which keeps them moving in the direction of conformity to the will and way of Christ in all things. (**1 John 1:7**) Unity does not mean perfection, but it does indicate that in spite of some differences we are seeking to know and do the will of God and will continue to maintain a harmonious atmosphere in which this can be done.
2. Don't seek to bind tradition beliefs on others. Tradition is fine if it remains tradition. It is when it is equated as God's truth that it becomes a disruptive force (**Matthew 15:5-9**). It is important that the congregation knows the difference between tradition and truth, and that traditional ways of doing things can and must be changed, but not the Word of God.
3. It is important that we do not try to push someone into going against his/her conscience. It is important that we live up to our conscience, but at the same time be open for our conscience to be better instructed from the Word (**Romans 14:19-23**). We should not try to force our private likes upon others who have a conscious concern with such an activity.
4. Without compromising, we need to emphasize areas of agreement and minimize areas of disagreement. We should all strive to maintain our relationship as brethren as we move closer together (**2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20**). It is our mutual respect for the Word of God that will deepen our unity with one another.

5. Don't be over-sensitive. Most disruptions of unity come from individuals who do not watch their tongue and others who are over-sensitive. We must not allow our faithfulness to Christ, or our loyalty to the ministry hang by a thin thread that any remark could cut it. We ALL need to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath (**James 1:19**).

6. Above all, let love reign (rule) in our hearts, which is the bond of perfection. This principle is the glue that holds us together (**Ephesians 4:2**). True Biblical Unity can only exist where there is love for God and for one another (**Matthew 22:37-38; John 13:34-35**). This love is shown by forbearance, gentleness, consideration, forgiveness, and all other such attitudes necessary to the maintaining of a Spirit of unity and peace. Remember, LOVE is NOT the best way to achieve unity, it is the ONLY way!

God's people need to be peacemakers. We need to bring people together, not drive them further apart. We need to learn true tolerance, firmness in gentleness, and forbearance with all who earnestly and sincerely seek the way of the Lord. We must put off our ugly attitudes that would disrupt unity in the body and put on those wonderful attitudes that help us to enjoy and appreciate one another's company in the Lord.