

We are in this Walk Together

I love the statement by the Theologian Elton Trueblood – He said “Church Goer is a vulgar ignorant term and should never be used. You cannot ‘go’ to church because you are the Church wherever you go!”

All of Paul’s letters contain a beautiful balance between doctrine and duty, and Ephesians is the perfect example. The first three chapters deal with doctrine while the last three chapters explain our walk and responsibilities in Christ.

Ephesians 4:1: *therefore* and *urge*

The main idea in these 16 verses is the unity of believers in Christ. This is simply the practical application of the teaching in the first half of Ephesians - God is building a body, a temple. He has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to Himself in Christ. The oneness of believers in Christ is already a spiritual reality. Our responsibility is to guard, protect, and preserve that unity. To do this, we must understand four important facts.

Ephesians 4:1–3 (NIV) Therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

1. Unity (Eph. 4:1–3)

Unity is not uniformity. Unity comes from within and is a spiritual grace, while uniformity is the result of pressure from without.

If we are going to preserve the “unity of the Spirit,” we must possess the necessary Christian graces, and there are seven that Paul lists.

Humility (when you think you have this you haven’t), *Gentleness* (Greek language, this word was used for a soothing medicine, a colt that had been broken, and a soft wind. In each case you have power, but that power is under control). *Patient* (literally means “long tempered,” the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back) this leads to *Bearing with one another* (a grace that cannot be experienced apart from *Love* (“Love suffers long and is kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4) *Make every Effort* (“eager to maintain, or guard” - the verb used here is a present participle, which means we must constantly be endeavoring to maintain this unity) *Peace* (“the bond of peace.” If a believer cannot get along with God, he cannot get along with other believers). When “the peace of God” rules in our hearts, then we build unity (Col. 3:15).

Ephesians 4:4–6 (NIV) ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2. The Basis for Unity (Eph. 4:4–6)

Paul names here the seven basic spiritual realities that unite all true Christians.

One Body This is, of course, the body of Christ in which each believer is a member, placed there at conversion by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:12–31).

One Spirit The same Holy Spirit indwells each believer, so that we belong to each other in the Lord. There are perhaps a dozen references to the Holy Spirit in

Ephesians, because He is important to us in the living of the Christian life (1 Corinthians 12:13).

One Hope. Refers to the return of the Lord to take His church to heaven. The Holy Spirit within is the assurance of this great promise (Eph. 1:13–14).

One Lord. This is our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, lives for us, and one day will come for us.

One Faith. There is one settled body of truth deposited by Christ in His church, and this is “the faith.” Jude calls it “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

One Baptism. Since Paul is here discussing the one body, this “one baptism” is probably the baptism of the Spirit, that act of the Spirit when He places the believing sinner into the body of Christ at conversion (1 Cor. 12:13).

One God and Father. Paul likes to emphasize God as Father (Ephesians 1:3, 17; 2:18; 3:14; 5:20). We all share the one loving, gracious and caring Father.

Ephesians 4:7-11 NIV But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” ⁹(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers

3. Spiritual Gifts are for Unity (Eph. 4:7–11)

Paul moves now from what all Christians have in common to how Christians differ from each other.

David teaches a course on Spiritual gifts...

Hand Illustration...

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers.

Paul taught that Christ is the Giver of these gifts, through the Holy Spirit vv8–10 He ascended to heaven as Victor forevermore.

The picture here is of a military conqueror leading his captives and sharing the spoil with his followers. Only in this case, the “captives” are not His enemies, but His own. Sinners who once were held captives by sin and Satan have now been taken captive by Christ. Even death itself is a defeated foe! When He came to earth, Christ experienced the depths of humiliation (Phil. 2:5–11), but when He ascended to heaven, He experienced the very highest exaltation possible. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, applying to Jesus Christ a victory song written by David (Eph. 4:8).

Ephesians 4:12-16 ...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting

ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

4. All of us have gifts to Grow Unity & Maturity (Ephesians 4:12–16)

The gifted leaders are supposed “to equip his people for works of service/ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up”

The saints do not call a pastor/s and pay them to do the work.

The members of the church grow by feeding on the Word and ministering to each other.

The 1st evidence of spiritual growth is *Christlikeness* – fullness of Christ

The 2nd evidence is *stability* – not blown around by every wind and wave.

The 3rd evidence of maturity is that they “*Speak the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15).

It has well been said that truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy.

The 4th evidence is *cooperation* (Eph. 4:16). We realize that, as members of the one body and a local body, we belong to each other, we affect each other, and we need each other.

Each believer, no matter how insignificant he may appear, is to exercise the ministry God has given to them.

The body grows as the individual members grow, and they grow as they feed on the Word and minister to each other.

Biblically the church has no ***laypersons*** (in the usual sense of that word) and yet is full of ***clergy*** (in the true meaning of that word-endowed, appointed, blessed)!