

UNITY:

agreement & the release of the Kingdom





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Unity does not equate with uniformity

Unity does not stifle creativity but gives it parameters – chord changes & improvisation

Unity overcomes dissension, schismatic mind-sets and angry words

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:19-20

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

John 17:20-23

A: THE CHURCH IN ACTS

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| 1. People desperate for God | 11. Softened hearts leading to an outpouring of the gifts |
| 2. Radical, fruitful repentance | 12. Constant commitment to prayer |
| 3. Salvation as an everyday experience | 13. Dependence on the leading of the Spirit |
| 4. Healing of the whole person | 14. Equipping to send out on mission |
| 5. Acute awareness of the holiness of God | 15. Acute awareness and immediate response to the voice of the Lord |
| 6. An impulse to testify | 16. Heart of Worship |
| 7. A sense of urgency | 17. God not boxed into the church |
| 8. A right "Fear of the Lord" | 18. Confidence in the Lord's provision in evangelism |
| 9. God-centred not man-centred priorities | |
| 10. Teaching & Ministering with great authority | |

FRUIT OF UNITY = KINGDOM MANIFEST

PSALM 133



B: PRINCIPLES

1. Independence to Interdependence

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

Isaiah 61:1-4

2. Listen, Hear & Obey TOGETHER Nehemiah 1-4

3. Locking arms and not leaving the line 'forwards & backs'

'no job beneath me' – no to "it is someone else's responsibility / job description – all pulling for each other

4. All having a shepherd's heart — stepping up as gatekeepers

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

... This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

"I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. Then they will know that I, the LORD their God am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Ezekiel 34



C: CHARACTERISTICS

1. Motivated to honour God — first and foremost

Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him Hebrews 11:6

2. Common Purpose & Common Vision

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

James 3:13 - 4:1

3. No Personal Ambition

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

James 4:1-4

4. Others come first

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Romans 12:1-2

5. Encourage (literally give courage to), Exhort others & allowing them to encourage us Barnabas outlook

6. Working with and toward the bond of peace

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace

Ephesians 4:3

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace

Romans 8:6

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts

and your minds in Christ Jesus

Philippians 4:7



D: AREAS OF UNITY

1. Jesus is Lord (not just Saviour!)

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 6:46-49

2. Lives of Praise and Thanksgiving mean we are motivated to give testimony to the work of the Lord in our lives
3. Repentance is key to the overcoming life
4. We have a Kingdom perspective — (two realms mentality AND the Kingdom of God is here NOW GODISNOWHERE!!!!)
5. Surrendering entitlements — we submit hearts, time, money etc. to Christ
6. The Lord is restoring His bride now
7. We are marked by compassion and mercy—which can mean speaking truth and not allowing someone to remain in sin or ignorance
8. We agree to become un-offendable
9. The Word of God is our final authority in all things
10. There is mutual submission and interdependence
11. We are committed to the pursuit of holiness and purity

SCHEMES AGAINST UNITY

- Communication – Leviathan
- Taking Offence – the choice factor
“going low” ***The Bait of Satan – John Bevere***
- Rebellion – not coming under authority, well used – lack of submissive heart
- Disappointment and disillusionment
- Pride – I know better – I’ve been taught by better people – my denomination is better
- Weak, people pleasing leaders
- Party Spirit



True submission flows out of brokenness

Pride and self-reliance lie under this. Use the trials you face to eliminate pride

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

Hebrews 5:8

We resist waiting and trusting in the trial and temptation. We know better—we don't need to submit and work through this, we don't need

C: INSUBORDINATION & PRIDE

- excusing insubordination with — I'm not understood
- dismissing authority if I perceive hypocrisy or character weakness
- demanding the person in authority treats me as an equal
- resentment of forceful leaders and ease with passive / needy ones
- inability to submit to someone younger or less experienced
- offence taken when I am not recognised or respected
- I need affirmation before I will submit
- I won't see that the issues start with me and I will look elsewhere to bring the blame

God has ordained peace and protection through the covering provided by submission — stand under the umbrella'

Insubordination will leave you feeling anxious and overburdened. Submission brings protection provision and interdependence — look at the story of Ruth & Boaz — the journey through submission is from poverty to provision and from isolation to security

God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

Psalms 68:6

Insubordination also takes on responsibility for the jobs that are not theirs. If we do not trust another to function properly then we will be convinced that we need to take on their role as well and we will live in utter anxiety.

Insubordination may have the appearance of being helpful and is not open rebellion.

D: INSUBORDINATION & ANXIETY

- I don't believe that those in authority have my best interests at heart. The Lord will not reward my submission
- I spend most of my time around people who are less mature than me
- I avoid the leaders or anyone who will challenge me — I seek advice from those who think like me
- I have fear, perhaps unarticulated, of the decisions taken by those in authority. I react with silence, a look of dismay or a seemingly innocuous statement — Are you sure about that? — this questions their ability to lead and causes them to doubt
- I worry about the decisions we are taking
- I worry about provision — I cannot trust
- I get angry when decisions are made without me



- It is more important to get everyone's opinion rather than progressing the matter
- Nothing goes smoothly— it is one struggle after another
- I spend ages worrying about things rather than seeking the opinion / revelation of someone in authority.
- I don't seek out instruction or correction
- If I don't tell people what I think it will all go wrong

DAMAGE DONE BY DOMINATING LEADERS / CONTROLLING THEOLOGY

Injustices are real but we are in danger in perpetuating them if we do not deal with their effects on us.
Heavy control will cause insubordination in us along with anger and fear and our own control in response
—FORGIVENESS AND REPENTANCE

