

MAINTAINING UNITY

Memory Verse
Eph 4:2-3

When sinners are together, there is always the potential for conflict. This is because pride produces conflict - Proverbs 13:10; James 4:1-3, and we are proud people.

Nevertheless, God insists that there be unity amongst His people - John 17:21-23.

? For this to happen, what are the necessary attitudes to have?

📖 Ephesians 4:2; Philippians 2:3

Humility

Here we treat others as if their needs are more important than our own. We surrender our perceived 'rights', which most often become the source of conflict. A selfish 'desire' becomes a 'need, which becomes a demand, which turns into conflict when not met. Instead, we are to serve one another.

Gentleness

This is using words and actions that are not harsh, cutting, brutal, short or nasty (Proverbs 15:1). Gentleness does not treat the weakness or immaturity of others with roughness. It responds to unjust treatment from others with meekness. We avoid a contentious, argumentative spirit, but seek peace with one another, taking injury and not returning it.

Long Suffering

This refers to choosing to not to be exhausted in patience with the faults, idiosyncrasies and personality of others. It smoothes over irritations, differing likes, attitudes, manners and ways.

Bearing With One Another in Love

Christians do not tolerate sin in one another – but they do tolerate one another.

? What are the various ways in which we do this?

📖 I Thes 5:14 - We are to recognise the different states amongst us and apply the right approach.



I Peter 4:8, Col 3:13 - If a person's weakness or act has not put them out of fellowship with God, we are to 'cover the multitude of sins'. This means overlooking minor offences.



Gal 6:1, Matt 7:3-5, Lk 17:3-4, Matthew 18:15-18
Rebuking Sin Where Necessary

When a person is out of fellowship with God, he or she is necessarily out of fellowship with other believers. This is when we need to meekly, gently point out the sin, with a desire to restore him or her to fellowship with God and with us.



I Cor 12:17-26
Enjoying the diversity as part of the unity



How is this done?



Gal 5:26 - We must not envy one another, nor must we insist others be as we are.



I Cor 12:15-19 - We must not think ourselves indispensable or independent. You need others, and they need you. The diversity is exactly what supplies the harmony. See



I Cor 8:8-13; Romans 14:13, 15, 21
Being Considerate With your Liberty in Christ
Though we may have differing convictions on non-moral issues, we should use this liberty with careful thought as to how other believers may react or respond to it. We must not despise or condemn others for their different but biblically-reasoned convictions .

We must also not parade our liberty in front of those who may differ with us. When someone's conscience has not yet settled, parading your liberty could cause that person to fall back into a sin-pattern that is destructive. Always err on the side of caution and discretion when it comes to disputed or contentious matters.