



COMMON TABLE (Part 3) - “The Foundation of Unity”

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.

1 Corinthians 11:27-32

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 NIV

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 Corinthians 12:24-27 NIV

But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Key Points

- Unity is one of the most widely accepted ideas, yet it is also one of the most challenging to put into practice.
- There are growing pains associated with learning to trust and being trusted.
- You should not discount yourself just because you are different from others.
- We value others for their sense of belonging and acknowledge their contribution to the whole.
- Mutual concern is what propels unity forward.
- We face struggles together; when we observe someone going through a tough season, we step into their struggle and offer emotional support. Likewise, when it's our turn to face difficulties, we invite others to stand beside us and do the same.
- Your personal holiness has an impact on our collective holiness. Your thoughts, attitudes, and actions can either contribute to or undermine the overall harmony.

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-19, 27-32. In these passages, the Apostle Paul addresses divisions within the church during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Why did Paul urge personal reflection and discernment to address this disunity?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. The analogy is made that the body of Christ is like a physical human body with different parts. How does this analogy help us understand the importance of diversity and unity within the church today? What are the implications for our interactions and relationships with fellow believers?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:24-27. The passage talks about suffering and rejoicing together as a body. How does this idea challenge our modern individualistic culture, and what are the benefits of collectively sharing in both joys and hardships within a faith community?

REFLECT

- How do you define unity, and why is it challenging to put into practice?
- What are some common growing pains associated with learning to trust and being trusted within a group or community?
- How does mutual concern play a role in propelling unity forward, and what are some practical examples of it in action?

RESPOND

- Can you share an experience where you observed someone going through a tough season, and you stepped in to offer emotional support? What impact did it have on the sense of unity within your group?
- Can you think of an example where someone's actions or attitudes negatively affected the collective holiness or unity of a group? What were the consequences?
- How can we create a culture where individuals are comfortable inviting others to stand beside them during difficult times, fostering a sense of unity?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.