



UNITY GROWS IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS

IN CIRCLES, NOT ROWS: PART 2

August 14, 2021

“The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort is a plan that has been presented before me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers also.”

–Ellen G. White, *Australasian Record*, 87–88

OUR VISION

1. **Every member** connects with Jesus and one another in a Connect Group (small group) and or a Sabbath School functioning as a Connect Group.
2. **All ministry** for one another and those outside the church walls flows out of these Connect Groups.

The strength of our church will largely come from what happens in these circles.

“ONE ANOTHER”

Ἀλλήλων → Translated “one another”

- It appears 100 times in the New Testament in 94 different verses.
- 59 of those occurrences are part of specific commands teaching

us how or how not to relate to one another.

- These commands break down into four groups
- 33% Focus on Unity in the Body of Christ (the church)
- 33% Focus on Christian Love
- 15% Focus on Humility
- 13 “one another” texts about random other commands, including kissing one another.

UNITY GROWS IN CIRCLES NOT ROWS:

One third of the “one another” commands in Scripture address the church getting along:

- Be at peace with one another (Mk. 9:50)
- Don’t grumble among one another. (Jn. 6:43)
- Be of the same mind with one another. (Ro. 12:6, 15:5)
- Accept one another. (Ro.15:7)
- Wait for one another before partaking of the Lord’s supper. (1 Cor. 11:33)
- Don’t bite, devour, and consume one another. (Gal. 5:15)
- Gently, patiently tolerate one another. (Ep. 4:2)
- Be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving one another. (Ep. 4:32)
- Bear with one another, forgive one another. (Co. 3:13)
- Seek good for one another, don’t repay evil for evil. (1 Th. 5:15)
- Don’t complain against one another. (Ja. 4:11, 5:9)
- Confess sins to one another. (Ja. 5:16)

**These texts are fulfilled in relationships,
which grow in circles, not rows.**

“Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another.
–James 5:16 (ESV)

UNITY’S FOUNDATION:

“Let us make man in our image.” –Genesis 1:26 (ESV)

We are image bearers of the Trinity. This is more than physical, we are to bear the image of the Trinity’s characteristics as well.

Jesus said about Himself, “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.” –John 5:19 (ESV)

Jesus said about the Holy Spirit, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” –John 16:13-14 (NIV)

UNITY = TRUST

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in a trusting relationship.

We will lack trust and thus unity if we only experience one another in rows!

Unity is what Jesus prayed for to grow our witness.

“The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” –John 17:22-23 (ESV)

How do we apply our foundation for unity and Jesus’ prayer for our witness in the church?

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” –Ephesians 4:1-5 (ESV)

“There is a direct relationship between small group ministries and church unity.” —Blake Coffee

When we unite in smaller gatherings, connect groups, we will be able to accomplish more as a larger united body as well.

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*Join a Connect Group. Start a Connect Group.
Facilitate a Connect Group.*

Learn more at spencervillechurch.org/connectgroups.

SERMON NOTES
