

## ***Temple Life – To Unite or Divide?***

Things were busy at the temple of God in Corinth. Sinners of all kinds had trusted Jesus Christ and demonstrated their faith by baptism. They were clean before God! Amazing grace! And now they were all “*called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord*”. They were in Christ’s church. And the church is not buildings but people. God is not content to just save believers from hell and then leave them in their loneliness.

Rufus the Roman slave, Beni the Jewish doctor, Stephanas an elder, Steven the teen, Julia the wife, Hannah the single sister, Dorcas the widow, Fortunatus the ex addict, Achaicus the grandfather, Salvatore the ex homosexual, Erastus the city treasurer, Rahaba the ex prostitute and Paul the apostle, would “*come together into one place*”. They, no matter of age, class or gender, assembled as one family (brethren) in the Name of their shared risen Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. This unity gathering is termed “*in the church*”.

This togetherness in one place shows the truth of the gospel – for does not the gospel unite all the saved as “*one in Christ Jesus*”? Oh, they had their daily lives with much liberty to fellowship in different ways. But to “*come together in the church*” is a special place to be. It’s where more than God’s words are learned but God’s ways – His heart!

His **way** of unity - where “*with one mind and one mouth*” praises are given in a world that crucified Him. His **way** of holiness - where a sinning believer would be disciplined to instill fear into all. His **way** of headship - where man as the head would be vocal and the woman silent (and man uncovered and woman covered at times). His **way** of learning - through a plurality of the Spirit’s gifts being used in the meeting which provides a rich diversity of diet. His **way** of age dynamics - where the younger learns from the older and older is encouraged by the younger. His **way** of reverence - where no one was to glory in man but in the Lord only, for it is His temple. His **way** of love - where each member of the body is able to support the other as the whole is present. His **way** of remembrance - where not only the bread is broken and the cup is drunk (representing the Lord’s physical body) but done together as “*one bread, and one body*” (the Lord’s spiritual body, the church). Yes, His **way** of order with love is shown to a disorderly and divided world.

Yet this unity of the Lord is being divided today into small groups with their specialty focuses. Today’s design would have the Corinthian believers coming *together* to divide. There would be the prostitute’s rehab, the single slave seminar, the teen topic time, the wives’ workshop, the grandfather’s lounge, the white collar office, the blue collar coffee and the woman’s worship (where she would no longer have to be silent “*in the church*”). Not that there is not room for these types of fellowship but it should happen in body life outside the church time. It should not replace or redesign God’s unique church meeting.

Rufus said that separating is as strange as dividing up a football team during game time by putting the running backs in the locker room while the quarterbacks are on the field. Beni asked, if all are divided up how can others “*say Amen at thy giving of thanks*”?

“*In the church*” is God’s “small group” that expresses His unity, wisdom and authority.

{Some Scriptures for the truth of the above teaching. “When ye come together in the church ... If therefore the whole church be come together in one place” 1Cor. 11:18, 14:23. See also: Acts 18:8, 1Cor. 1:9, 6:9-11, 12:13, 3:16, 5:4, 14:26, chapters 5, 11, 14, 10:17, 11: 34, 35, 11:1-16, 1:29-3, 16:15-17, chapter 12, 1:11, Rom. 15:6, 16:23, 2Tim. 4:20, 1Cor. 14:16, 1Cor 2:5-7.}