

What Should the Church Look Like?

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Lakeview Christian Center

Introduction: What is the church to be?

What should we be experiencing in the context of an authentic, NT church? What are the marks of a biblical church?

Accomplishing our Mission is impossible without unity!

A. What unity isn't

1. Legalism: Our relationships are given to us for our mutual edification, enjoyment and pleasure, not to be a noose around our neck or a list of rules and regulations.

2. Control: If talking about Christ – YES If talking about man – NO

Hebrews 13:7, 17-18 ESV

II Chronicles 30:12

How do we know that the "man" leading us is indeed telling us the same thing as Christ would say to us?

ANSWER: *Spiritual Authority & Leadership*

Acts 17:10-11

You, as a member of this church, have a God-given, biblical mandate to study for YOURSELF to see if what you are being taught is true!

The Holy Spirit has always USED men, and men always make mistakes, they sin, they fail – THAT's why we need a Savior!

And THAT's why Christ is the Head of this Church!

3. Conformity: If to Christ, and His image: YES

But if to a man or a movement – NO

“The Sovereign Grace Mold”

4. Independence: If self-sufficiency – NO

If standing against the world – YES

Total _____ on God alone and _____ on one another as a church.

The ONLY truly self-sufficient One is God Himself!

5. Individuality: YES, because our differences are God given and they bring Him much glory!

Acts 17

I Cor 12

B. WHY unity is such a treasure to us?

1. It is the fruit of the Cross of Christ

We know that apart from the work of Christ on the cross, we wouldn't care about those who are different from us!

“What it is that is being commended (*brethren dwelling together in unity*) is not only not quarreling, and devouring one another, but delighting in each other with mutual endearments, and promoting each other's welfare with mutual services.” *Matthew Henry*

2. Unity is the freedom to love and respect others

Psalm 133 “together”

3. It comes from God!

God is the source of our unity and the author of our diversity.

"The Spirit who is responsible for their being *one body* is also the basis for the *many parts* necessary for the body to function at all."
Gordon Fee

Romans 15:5-7

Conclusion: Ephesians 4:1-6, 25-32

"By giving into sin, they grieve the Holy Spirit, who has formed them into a body and whose continuing presence is intended to bring the body to full maturity." *Gordon Fee*

We need to be more aware of and more alert to how it dishonors and grieves God when we sin against one another.

"By living in peace with one another, they are to preserve the oneness that the Spirit imparts to all who are baptized into the body of Christ."
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Prayerfully consider:

1. We can "let things go", thinking we're being gracious and merciful when in reality we're just "sweeping it under the rug". Then, when that sin is repeated, we are quick to add the most recent offense to "the list".
2. We can try to convince ourselves that "everything's OK" or "it will be fine" when, in our heart, it isn't.

3. We can excuse ourselves and rationalize issues based on worldly perspectives of fairness, feelings/emotions and self-deception. Truth is: we trust ourselves way too much!

4. We can avoid confrontation with others, which becomes fertile ground for disunity and distrust in the future.

5. To what degree do you passionately desire and pursue unity in the body of Christ – unity in THIS church?