

Being Salt and Light in our Community

(Through the way that we live our lives)



Jesus said,



“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

(Matthew 5:13)

Jesus then went on to say,

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)



- I will begin by looking at two passages of Scripture that clearly illustrate what it is to become salt and light in the world around us**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”



“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.



**Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us...”
(Ephesians 4:29, 31-32, 5:1-2)**

The Apostle Paul also wrote, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil.



Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

Be these.
Matthew 5:13-16

(Romans 12:9-13) “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” **(Romans 12:17-18)**

- **A loving Christian Church has the potential to bring transformation to a community**
- Today I want to look at one great key to seeing our church and lives making a great impact in our community; *“The importance of having unity of the Spirit in our church fellowships and in the way that we relate to one another”*



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:1-3)



- It is interesting to note that the Apostle Paul first wrote about the importance of having unity of the Spirit before writing about the spiritual gifts (the five ministry offices) that Christ gave for the nurture and equipping of His Church



The Apostle Paul wrote after emphasising the importance of having unity of the Spirit,
“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **EQUIPPING** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, to a perfect, man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”
(Ephesians 4:11-13)



- The bible clearly emphasises the importance of believers living together in unity
- We must never take for granted the blessing of having a church family
- God's heart is that there would be unity amongst all believers
- Jesus clearly emphasised this when He prayed for all believers towards the end of His time here on earth



Jesus in His prayer to His Father in heaven for all believers said,



“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” **(John 17:20-23)**

- Unity is also a great key to seeing God's blessing upon our lives and families and churches

King David wrote, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing –Life forevermore.” **(Psalm 133:1-3)**



- The early church was characterized by great unity and grew rapidly. We see this in the book of Acts



“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.” **(Acts 2:42-45)**

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” **(Acts 2:46-47)**



- The simple fact is that we are better together
- No one can do the Christian walk alone
- We all need the love and support of other believers if we are to realise our full potential in Christ
- There is a greater synergy when we work together with other believers



- **One will put a thousand to flight, but two ten thousand to flight (Deuteronomy 32:30)**

*Alone we are
strong...
together we are
stronger*

**“One can put a
thousand to flight, and
two can put ten
thousand to flight.”
(Deuteronomy 32:30)**



**We also see the synergy of working together in the book of Leviticus where we read,
“Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.” (Leviticus 26:8)**

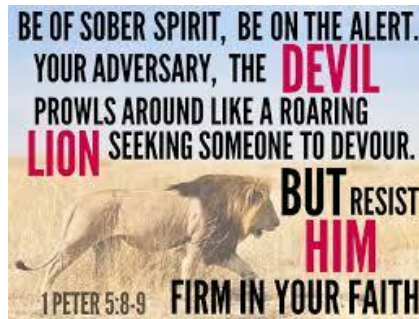
- **The way that we love other believers is actually our greatest witness to those in the world**

Jesus made this very clear when He said,

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)



- Given the great blessing that comes from dwelling together in unity with other believers the enemy, (the Devil) will continually try and sow strife and discord in our homes and churches



- The enemy knows that he can destroy even healthy homes and church fellowships through causing strife and division to develop within our homes and church fellowships

- Jesus Himself made it clear that a house divided against itself will not stand when He said,



“Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.” **(Matthew 12:25)**

- The church (which is the body of believers) and the family unit are God ordained, that is God's idea. God has designed the church and the family unit to help people to be connected in fellowship with others

In the book of Psalms we read,

"God sets the solitary in families;

He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in the dry land." (Psalm 68:6)



- It is within the context of healthy and loving homes and church fellowships that people can have a sense of belonging and be nurtured and encouraged to become all that God has planned for their lives



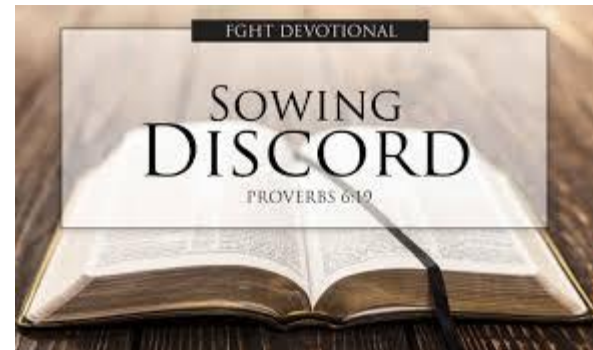
- Church fellowships and the family unit provide us with a setting where we can have our relational needs met

- Having good loving relationships with others is a great key to being emotionally healthy
- Given the significance of the home unit and our church fellowships, God is very much against people deliberately sowing strife in our church fellowships and homes



In the book of Proverbs we read,

“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.” (Proverbs 6:16-19)



- We are now living in a time when the Devil is trying to destroy the family unit and to undermine and break down church fellowships



Jesus Himself said in relation to the times that we are now living in,

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. (Matthew 24:10-11)

- As individual believers we all have a part to play in helping to cultivate loving and healthy homes and church fellowships



- But like a chain we are only as strong as our weakest link. It only takes one person who the enemy can find to sow strife and discord into our homes and church fellowships to breakdown the unity and love in our homes and church meetings

- A church characterized by love and unity will truly make a difference in the community
- For the remainder of this teaching I will be looking at how we can maintain love and unity in all of our church fellowship meetings and at home
- I will firstly look at three things that the enemy can use to cause people to introduce strife and discord into our church fellowships and homes.
Attitudes and behavioural patterns that we must refuse to adopt in our own life



1) Selfish ambition and envy

- Where it is no longer about the team



Be these.
Matthew 5:13-16

In the book of James we read,

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” **(James 3:13-16)**

2) Being unwilling to forgive those that have hurt us



In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (Hebrews 12:14-15)

- Holding on to past offences will negatively affect our ability to relate to others NOW, **AND**

3) Gossiping about and speaking badly about others

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.”

(Proverbs 16:28)



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

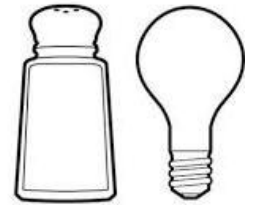
- I will now finish by quickly looking at six things that we can do individually to help promote unity in our homes and church fellowships

1) That we always look for the best in others

- Love covers a multitude of sins

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” **(1 Peter 4:7-9)**



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

- **We must continually choose to look for the best in others rather than always looking for the faults in others**



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus Himself said, “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” **(Matthew 7:1-5)**

- We all need God's grace and mercy and grace from others because none of us are perfect
- We need to learn to see people the way that Jesus sees them
- That we learn to value and appreciate people the way that God does
- That we choose to look for the best in others at all times



2) That we esteem others better than ourselves



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” **(Philippians 2:3)**

- It is so important that we are more focused on helping others to do well in life than just getting our own needs met all the time in life
- That we have a desire to see others succeed in life

3) That we only speak words of life and encouragement to others



Be these.
Matthew 5:13-16

In the book of Proverbs we read,
“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.” **(Proverbs 18:21)**

“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!” **(Proverbs 15:23)**

- People thrive in an atmosphere of love and acceptance
- Continually speaking words of encouragement to others will help to create this atmosphere in our homes and church fellowship meetings and promote unity



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:6)

Again the Apostle Paul wrote,

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29)



- **The way that we speak to others greatly affects the environment around us**
- For this reason we need to always choose to speak words of life and encouragement to others



4) That we are always quick to forgive others

Jesus Himself said,

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” **(Mark 11:25-26)**



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

- **Being always quick to forgive others helps us to maintain healthy relationships with others and intimacy in our relationship with the Lord**

5) That we live our life to serve others with our gifts and talents



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus Himself said,

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” **(Matthew 20:25-28) AND**

6) That we always choose to remain humble and teachable



Be these.
Matthew 5:13-16

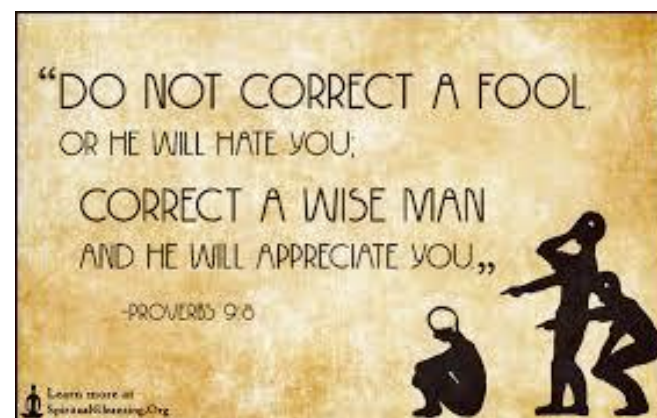
In the book of Proverbs we read,

“By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.” **(Proverbs 13:10)**

- Humble people are teachable and allow people to speak into their lives. They are not always defensive and argumentative

In the book of Proverbs we read,

**“Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give
instruction to a wise man, and he will be still
wiser; Teach a just man, and he will increase in
learning.” (Proverbs 9:8-9)**



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, as the elect of God,
holy and beloved, put on tender
mercies, kindness, humility, meekness,
longsuffering; bearing with one another, and
forgiving one another, if anyone has a
complaint against another; even as Christ
forgave you, so you also must do. But above
all these things put on love, which is the bond
of perfection.” **(Colossians 3:12-14)**



Be these.

Matthew 5:13-16

- **Jesus Himself is our example of what true humility is**

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)



So in conclusion:

- It is *only* in maintaining an intimate walk with the Lord that we are able to consistently apply the keys in this teaching for promoting unity in our own lives
- May I encourage you to always make your love for Christ your greatest priority in life
- In doing this you will continually grow in Christlike character and the fruit of the Spirit and be salt and light in the world around you



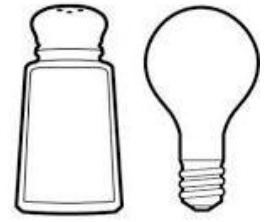
The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

- **As we continue to collectively grow in Christlike character we will see great unity in our church meetings in the days to come so that truly as a church we can be salt and light in our community**



- May I encourage you that your life can make a great difference in the lives of many in the days to come as you continue to be salt and light in the world around you
- As we all shine in our respective missions fields, truly as a church we can make a great difference in the community around us as we all help to bring the goodness of God into the world around us
- We all as believers have a unique ministry and missions field where we can help others to connect to the true source of hope, Jesus Christ



I will finish with one final Scripture that illustrates the importance of fellowshiping together with other believers. *We all need one another*



In the book of Hebrews we read, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23-25)