



GOD'S DESIGN

A Community of Unity *AND* Diversity

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

A community that is unified

John 17:11, 20-23

- A community unified around a **person** - *Jesus Christ*
- A community unified around a **story** - *The Gospel*
- A community unified around a **book** - *The Bible*
- A community unified around a **mission** - *To Make Disciples*

Q: How has the pandemic brought challenges to this unity? What are some of the not so healthy boundary markers we can draw up in our churches?

A community that is diverse

Revelations 5:9-10; Ephesians 2:11-16; Acts 2:1-11; 13:1

Q: What are some reasons why God might desire a diverse community?

"The local church is not a collection of your closest friendships." - **Mark Dever**

"If Jesus put Simon the Zealot (an insurrectionist who hated the Roman occupiers) on the same team as Matthew the tax collector (a collaborator with the Romans) and then made them room together, I'm not sure why we can't have some strong differences on the hot-button issues of our day and still march together under the banner of unity. In Fact, unity that insists on uniformity isn't unity as all. It's a cheap counterfeit. Genuine and biblical unity is found in the midst of real and passionate differences that we set aside in the recognition that the differences we have are nowhere as important as the King we serve." - **Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, page 29**

REFRAMING OUR EXPECTATIONS

We must reframe our expectations to match what God expects of us

→ *We are to* _____ - James 1:19

→ *We are to make* _____ & _____ - Ephesians 2:15-16; 4:32; Romans 12:18

→ *We are to* _____ *to one another* - Ephesians 5:21

Q: What are some reasons why these expectations would be critical to being both unified and diverse as a community?

Q: How might the Gospel empower us to embrace these expectations and move towards others who are different than us?

"The gospel creates community. Because it points us to the One who died for his enemies, it creates relationships of service rather than selfishness. Because it removes both fear and pride, people get along inside the church who could never get along outside. Because it calls us to holiness, the people of God live in loving bonds of mutual accountability and discipline. Thus the gospel creates a human community radically different from any society around it." - **Tim Keller, *Center Church*, page 311**

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

LOOK INWARD - Think about your own heart...

Q: In what way(s) have you potentially hindered unity amongst God's people? What attitudes or perspectives might you need to repent of? (EX: Is there a group of people you look down upon? Have you valued something else above Jesus that has hurt unity?)

EMBRACE EFFORT // AWKWARDNESS // PROCESS - Take a baby step...

Q: What would it look like for you to move towards someone who is different than you in the church body?

Q: Who do you need to listen to that is different from you? Find someone with a different viewpoint on something divisive in our culture. Be curious and learn about their experience.

"When we say community or intimacy, people instinctively think of a warm group of loving friends. Don't confuse that with the body of Christ. The non-warm, non-loving people - the weak - require my ongoing death. Jesus died to make us one. We die to make that a present reality." - **Paul Miller, *J Curve*, page 273**