

Put Yourself in the Picture



[Put Yourself in the Picture \(Stephen Richardson\) - YouTube](#)

The visiting ministry team encountered what they called “a taste of heaven,” they said they experienced God’s love and unity in the Spirit here at All Nations. That is truly a great encouragement for us all.

Love and unity always go hand in hand, so we value them and want to maintain them, especially as we enter this new season of equipping to serve the Kingdom of God in love.

The word of God exhorts us to unity in the Spirit through the bond of peace; The Lord commands a blessing where there is unity **Psalm 133: 1 & 4a** *How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! ...for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

We are a church of all nations, all ages and all stages. Look round the room, we are not all the same! But we are all one in Christ Jesus; our experience of unity comes as we submit to one another in love, which is a work of the Holy Spirit.

However, in this season of equipping to serve in love, we can expect the world, the flesh, and the devil to scheme against unity; Jesus warned in **John 10:10**: *the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy...* Therefore, we must make every effort to maintain the love, unity and peace that we experience at this time.

So, what is unity? First what it is not! Unity is not unanimity nor is it uniformity! Unity is not agreement on everything, nor is unity being all the same – except to become like Jesus and have the mind of Christ – in that we all agree!

I would like to bring 3 points from our study on unity:

1. Our unity in Christ’s body, is a fact (Rom 12:4-6)
2. Our experience of unity depends on us (Phil 2:1-4)
3. Our unity will reveal the love God demonstrated on the cross at Calvary (John 17:21)

1. Our unity in Christ's body, is a fact (objective)

Once you are born again you are baptised into Christ's body; you are marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. Christian doctrines we are studying in Ephesians on Tuesday mornings.

In another of Paul's letters he wrote to the church in Rome, saying there are many parts to the body of Christ. God created each one of us to be unique (e.g. finger print, DNA, eye, voice etc.), and to receive different gifts to serve His body; we respond to His grace and love for us and in return we love Jesus and one another.

Romans 12:4-6 *For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us...*

2. Our experience of unity depends on us (subjective)

Joni Eareckson Tada said: "Believers are never told to become one; we already are one but we are expected to act like it."

It's normal to disagree on non-essential and peripheral issues but for the preservation of unity we always choose to disagree, agreeably!

Ephesians 4:2 *To be completely humble, gentle, and patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Ephesians 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Philippians 2:1-4 *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

Therefore, unity in the biblical sense, is a state of oneness and harmony, in a relationship with Jesus, which unites us with Him and with one another by His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit (love).

This is the truth about being one in Christ, whether it feels like it or not! However, our experience of unity depends on our understanding and belief of who we are in Christ. Therefore:

Ephesians 4:3-6 *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

3. Our unity and love will reveal the love God demonstrated on the cross at Calvary

The Trinity is the greatest example of unity and Jesus prays for all believers to be one, as they are one.

John 17:23 *I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

The unity of the Spirit is highly valued throughout scripture!

Summary: The truth is that we are already united with Christ as we are baptised into His body, but we are exhorted to experience unity, so we must choose to walk by the Spirit in love, moment by moment.

1. Our unity in Jesus, is a fact
2. Our experience of unity depends on us
3. Our unity and love will reveal the love God demonstrated on the cross at Calvary

It's important to remember that we are not in competition with each other nor with other churches, but rather unity is expressed in love for Jesus, for one other and for the lost. We therefore celebrate our gifts, and our expressions of faith in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God!

We are to live in light of the truth that we are one in Christ Jesus and with each other because of what Jesus has already done for us.

The Challenge as we move forward in this new season, is to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace,

AMEN.

ALL NATIONS

TODAS AS NAÇÕES