

Unity

by Wayne Goff

"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" (John 17:20-21).

Jesus' one desire of His true followers is that they remain united as He and the Father are united. The stated purpose is that the world might believe that God sent Jesus into the world. The Lord's church and people are to be a *light* to the world (Matt. 5:14) — an **example** of how unity is attained and kept.

Indeed the first church in Jerusalem is described as being *"together"* with *"all things in common"* and *"continuing daily with one accord"* (Acs 2:44-46). How was this accomplished? *"Then fear came upon every soul,..."* (Acts 2:43). This is a reverential fear of God and the desire not to displease Him. The attitude had enveloped the entire church.

Even when the church began to suffer persecution, Luke describes the disciples as being *"of one heart and one soul;..."* (Acts 4:32). These brethren were sacrificial and God-fearing.

The fractured church at Corinth was admonished to develop a united disposition: *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10). Every member of the local church was encouraged to *"speak the same thing"* (unity in doctrine) and *"be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (unity in purpose and opinion). When brethren become divided over matters of *judgment*, then there can be no unity and peace. We are not to exalt our opinions and judgments above those of others — *"Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion"* (Rom. 12:16). The recipe for unity is fairly simple. It takes *humility* and a *sacrificial attitude* to put it in practice.

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