

A person with their arms raised in a church setting, with other people visible in the background.

A LETTER FROM PASTOR ROB

Unity In Covid

Hey Pathway Family!

I am sure you can agree that this has been a whirlwind of a year. We have experienced the ups and downs that have come due to our lack of experience with a virus that has spanned the globe. I know that I have been impacted on many levels with all the disunity that has taken place in the Christian Church. I cannot help but see the evil one at work in all of this to create division in the church to discredit the cause of Christ. To be clear, **THE EVIL ONE WILL ULTIMATELY FAIL!**

We all have frustrations with how this is impacting us locally. We also have frustrations with how the Church is being viewed at this time. There are three truths that we need to remember as we function as the body.

JESUS IS NOT surprised by the Devil's attacks.

John 17:15, 20-23 *NIV*

15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 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.

Jesus knows that we will face times where our unity will be challenged and prayed for us to be unified through all attacks, temptations, and adversities. Jesus stresses His desire for our unity in His prayer for us. Valuing what Jesus stresses as important not only makes sense but is the better way. When we pursue unity, we honor His prayer for us, and the Gospel becomes the focus rather than what we do not see eye to eye on.

Secondly,

We are called unity within the body

Paul speaks so often about the need for the family of God to be united and to give charity in areas of grievances.

Philippians 2:2 *NIV*

2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

1 Peter 3:8 *NIV*

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Some of the phrases that explain what it means to be like-minded are:

Be in unison

Be in harmony

Be of one mind

Have a singleness of heart

Be one in spirit and mind

Share the same feelings

Focus on the same goal

Be intent on one purpose



Paul explains to the Church how important it is for us to be a united body in Christ. He reminds us of the humility of Jesus, who became a man and was crucified on the cross for our sins. He encourages us to let the mind of Christ be in us.

He tells us to do all things without grumbling and arguing so that we might be lights amid this dark and perverse world.

Philippians 2:14-16 *NIV*

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Colossians 3:13 NIV

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

So, we allow for people to have varied opinions on matters that do not pertain to salvation, but we do not allow those thoughts to divide us as a body of believers. How we love through all of this sends a message to non, new, and long-time believers. We are called to shine!

If we do not shine our lights in the darkness, who will? Jesus reminded us of this in Matthew 5:16 when He said,

“LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.”

The enemy will do everything he can to try to destroy the body of Christ by trying to divide and conquer us. He will try to ruin our testimony by having us bicker and argue or disagree. He will use anything he can to get our minds and focus off what we should be doing and cause division among believers. We are called to unite in our common salvation not to divide along our preferential lines. As Pastor Andrew has said, “we agree to disagree agreeably”.

Thirdly,

GOD WINS!!!

It is God who binds us together and has made us one. He has a plan for His Church and neither the works of man nor the Devil can overthrow that plan.

GOD BINDS US TOGETHER IN HIS HOLY FAMILY

Romans 12:5 NIV

5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 15:5-6 NIV

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6 so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is God who ultimately holds us together as we submit to Him. That is the secret sauce for the times we find ourselves in. In Jesus, all those things that would naturally separate us are not as important as they once were because we are adopted as sons and daughters into one body and belong to each other. There is so much more to who God made us than we often realize, I believe Peter said it well in 1 Peter 2:9:

BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, GOD'S SPECIAL POSSESSION, THAT YOU MAY DECLARE THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS WONDERFUL LIGHT.

We need to remember that even though things are uncertain and difficult, God the creator and sustainer of all things, whose possession we are, works for the good of those who love Jesus.

Romans 8:28 *NIV*

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

So do not kid yourself, God is working in this!

In John 17, Jesus prays for our unity and our unity is evidence of His Gospel. For that reason, pursuing church unity is worth the effort, because it results in seeing Christ glorified on earth. So, we honor Jesus with our words, attitudes, and actions. And when that happens it strengthens believers and draws unbelievers to God's power, love, and salvation.

let us continue to understand what church unity is and seek it with the power of God's Spirit, giving allowance for each other and honoring Jesus in it all.

Lastly,

We Are Here

Many are struggling right now, and many are needing various levels of connection. We are a church and that means we carry each other's burdens.

Galatians 6:2 *NIV*

2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

If you need anything, anything at all; we are here. Let us know so that we can walk with you and together fulfill the law of Christ. The law of Love.



Pastor Rob Haslam
Lead Pastor
Pathway Community Church

**MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT
THROUGH THE BOND OF PEACE.**

EPHESIANS 4:3

