

Community and Belonging

I. **Philippians 2:1-11**

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

“There are no letters in the New Testament apart from the problems of the church.”¹

“As far as myself am concerned, all is well; the one thing that really can add to this is that all should be well with you.”²

Unity within a Community is the Appeal of Scripture.

II. **How Do We Strive for Unity?**

1. **Remember the Source of True Unity.**

“...*Complete my joy* by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” – Philippians 2:2

“Paul was so passionate about this that he cared little about himself as long as the church was getting it right. Though he was in prison on a capital charge, chained, guarded 24/7, afflicted by those who should be his friends, with execution at hand, he rested his joy in Christ and the gospel and insisted that his joy would be “complete” if they lived

¹ Karl Barth, quoted in R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians*, pg. 74.

² Martyn Lloyd-Jones

out their unity in the gospel. That's all the happiness Paul sought! He knew that to be gospel oriented is to be others oriented."³

2. Pursue Unity in Demonstrable Ways.

"There is an openness implied in that line: "Let each of you look not only to his own house, job, money, family, and friends, but also to the house, job, money, family and friends of others."⁴

"The most persuasive argument for the Christian faith is the Christian community."⁵

3. Imitate Jesus by "Emptying" Yourself.

"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master." – John 13:14-16

4. Keep Your Eyes on Our "Common Allegiance"

- A. Our identity is not in our politics**
- B. Jesus is the only Savior**
- C. Don't forget your true citizenship.**
- D. Strive to be remembered for how you loved, not how you voted.**
- E. Let God's Word be your final word.**
- F. Don't demand or demonize people who don't vote like you.**

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³ R. Kent Hughes, Philippians, pg. 76.

⁴ Matt Chandler pg. 75

⁵ Todd Engstrom, Executive Pastor, Austin Stone Community Church