

Sermon Series: Why Do I Need the Church?
To be used with: We Support One Another
Sermon Title Possibilities: Building-Up Together
Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-7,11-16

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*Why Do I Need the Church?*” this sermon explains that the Christian life is a family affair. No believer grows alone. We support one another through dedication, through identification, through maturation, and through edification. This sermon answers the question of: How do we help each other show, know, grow, and flow in the body of Christ?

Introduction: The apostle moves from teaching about what we should believe—in chapters one through three—to how we should behave—in chapters four through six. He leaves the subject of Christian doctrine and moves to the subject of Christian duty. In this chapter, he speaks about our faithfulness (v.1-3), our fellowship (v.4-6), our favor (v.7-10), our formation (11-16), and our furtherance (v.17-32).

The thing to remember is that the Christian was made for community. The Christian matures in community, and the Christian ministers in community. This is why we need the church. We must saturate ourselves with the Word of God, we must submit ourselves to the Spirit of God, and we must surround ourselves with the people of God.

1. We Support One Another through Our Dedication. (v. 1-3)

There are two key phrases in these three verses. The first is “live worthy.” The apostle is challenging the saints—and the Spirit is challenging us—to live a life that is devoted to Christ and reflects the grace we have been given. The idea is that we would try to live up to the goodness that God has shown toward us. That is, we should show forth the type of godliness that reflects our gratitude to God.

The other key phrase is “Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.” We are to diligently endeavor to walk worthy, walk in humility, and walk in unity with the saints. We should make every effort to live with excellence before the church, embrace in the church, and engagement with the church.

2. We Support One Another through Our Identification. (v. 4-6)

Paul reminds the church that we are immersed into one body, we are indwelt by one Spirit, we are identified with Christ by one baptism. Furthermore, we are in one family, with one future, because we have one Father. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is our one Lord. No Christian has more or less of God than any other Christian. We are all recipients of the love, grace, and mercy of God. We all bear His Spirit and believe in His Son. As we affirm these truths, we support one another through our identification.

The challenge for us is to labor like we have the same future, to love like we have the same Father, and to lift each other up like we live in the same family. So, let's walk in integrity (v.1), walk in humility (v.2), and walk in unity (v.3-6).

3. We Support One Another through Our Maturation. (v. 7-12)

In these six verses, Paul is teaching us that we have all been given the grace to mature (v. 7), we have all been given the gifts to help others mature (v.8-10), and we've all been given the guidance to help others and ourselves mature (v. 11-12). God has equipped His church with every spiritual gift—both supernatural ability and spiritual leaders—to keep on growing into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

In light of these passages, we should discover our spiritual gifts, develop our spiritual gifts, and deploy our spiritual gifts for the glory of God and the growth of other saints in the church. Furthermore, we should make sure we pray for pastors and participate in the local church—because it is through the leadership of pastors and the fellowship of the saints that the body of Christ will be edified.

4. We Support One Another through Our Edification. (v. 13-16)

There's some truth to the old saying, "every tub must sit on its own bottom." In the case of the church, God wants every believer to be a mature and equipped follower of Jesus Christ. Also, God wants every mature and equipped follower of Jesus Christ to help others become mature and equipped followers of Jesus Christ. This is the message from these verses to the individuals in the church and the institution we call the church.

The Lord gifted us to cause spiritual growth in others (v.7-10). God guides us to cause spiritual growth in others (v. 11-12). God grooms us to cause spiritual growth in others (v. 13-15). And, God gathers us to cause spiritual growth in others. As pastors teach the Word of God (v.11), as saints grow in the ways of God (12-14), and do the work of God (v.15), the church of God is built up in and for God (v.16).

Conclusion: The Christian life is a life of interdependence. Every saint needs the church and the church needs every saint. The challenge for each one of us is to live a life of excellence as the Church, a life of embrace among the church, and a life of engagement with the church.

Reginald D. Taylor holds a Master of Christian Studies and a Master of Divinity from Union University and Capital Seminary & Graduate School. He is currently pursuing the Ph.D. degree in Biblical Preaching at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He currently serves as an adjunct professor at Union University and Senior Pastor of The Rock Church in Southaven, MS. He and his wife Dr. Tarra R. Taylor have one grown son.