

Life Together

A study of "One Another" commands

The early church was made up of people from different cultures. At Pentecost at least 15 ethnic groups are mentioned. The two main groups were Jews, those who had access to the Old Testament Scriptures and observed the laws of Moses; and Gentiles, those who had little or no teaching from Scripture. The difference in culture and background often led to conflict between these two groups. Early Christians had to learn to accept one another.

"Accept One Another"

Study Guide – Volume 4

1. Think about a time when you were an "outsider." How did it feel? Were you accepted or not? Why or why not?

READ ROMANS 14:1 – 15:7

Note: In this passage Paul is not talking about the foundational truths of the gospel, but about differences that arise from different cultures, backgrounds, and theological perspectives. These are "middle matters," issues where there may be significant differences of opinion and practice among sincere Christians.

2. Read Romans 14:1 – 8. What were some of the issues the early Christians struggled with in accepting one another?
3. What are some of the issues that divide God's people today, where people have different views and practices?
4. Who do you think Paul is talking about when he speaks about the one "whose faith is weak"? (vs. 1) Give some current examples.

5. Romans 15:7 summarizes this passage. What does it mean to accept one another “as Christ accepted you”? How does this affect our conduct?
6. In Romans 14:1 – 15:7 Paul gives us a number of principles in dealing with dealing with differences of conviction and practice. Write down principles you see (work in groups of 2 or 3), then discuss them as a group.
- 14:1-5
 - 14:5 – 8
 - 14:9 – 12
 - 14:13 – 18
 - 14:19 – 23
 - 15:1 - 7

“The exclusion of the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people, from a Christian community may actually mean the exclusion of Christ; in the poor brother Christ is knocking at the door.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

7. How can we maintain firm convictions (14:5), and still be gracious in accepting those who differ from us?
8. Why the focus on the Gentiles in Romans 15:7 – 12? What is the impact on non-Christians when Christians live in harmony and unity?
9. What issues do you think may be potentially divisive in our church? What can we do to maintain unity? Pray for one another and the church.

Praise and prayer requests...

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