

THE UNITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Introduction

My Dearly Beloved Brethren, It is absolutely necessary that we give a comprehensive study on the Unity of the local Church (the Church of Christ). The importance of this message is timely and cannot be over emphasised. The Unity of the local Church is the Spiritual bond designed by God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to preserve the Church as one body, as declared by apostle Paul in **Eph. 4:3-6**.

Eph 4:3-6

endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. NKJV

BRETHREN, DO WE NEED UNITY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH? WHY IS UNITY NECESSARY?

DEFINITION OF KEY WORDS

It is important that we define the following words to enable us understand this message properly.

1. UNITY
2. CHURCH
3. LOCAL CHURCH

UNITY – Can be simply defined as the state of forming a complete and harmonious whole, especially with reference to the body of Christ (The Church).

“CHURCH” - The English word “CHURCH” is translated from the Greek word “*ekklesia*” Meaning: A called out body of people from the world through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve God through Christ. **1 Peter 2:9 -10**.

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

LOCAL CHURCH:

The term local church can be defined as believers who have the same faith in Christ Jesus, worshiping together in a specific locality or community are referred to as the local church. e.g. **Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 1:2.**

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: NKJV.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY AMONG BRETHREN

Beloved, the Unity of the local church is the bedrock of peace and growth in the local congregation. Brethren, a comprehensive study of church history revealed the fact that, members of every local Church must not under mind the basic requirements needed to achieve Unity in the local Church.

THE FEAR OF GOD

Matt. 24:37 - 40

LOVE – AMONG BRETHREN etc.

Brethren, on these, the local Church will achieve Unity and growth, both physically and spiritually.

THE FEAR OF GOD – is one of the greatest Christian characteristics every true and faithful Child of God must possess to enjoy physical and spiritual blessing that comes from the Creator. In **Hosea 4:6**, the scriptures declared. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.* It is on this basis a lawyer asked this question in **Matt. 22:34 – 40.**

34 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." NKJV

My beloved Brethren, without Brotherly love in the local Church, Unity among brethren cannot be achieved. Love is a basic requirement for the Unity of the local Church, this love is not Eros love, neither is it Philos love, but AGAPE Love. It is an unconditional and selfless love. The love that demonstrates the characteristics of God towards man. As declared in **Rom. 5:8.**

What is Division?

Division can be defined as the state or process of being divided into fractions.

Brethren, Why do we need to talk about division in the local Church?

The need to talk about division among Brethren in the local congregation is a matter of great concern to the leadership of the local Church, as this may lead to disorderliness and strife among Brethren if not properly handle. The unavoidable question we need to ponder on is:

Why are you carnal about that which belong to the Lord?

IS THE CHURCH NO LONGER THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Why are you trying to cause division by fractionalising the Church into groups? It is on this ungodly act apostle Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit addressed the situation at Corinth in **1 Cor. 1:10 – 17.**

10 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. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. NKJV

JESUS PRAYED FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH – JOHN 17:20 - 26

John 17:20-23

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 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. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one.

John 17:23-26 - *I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." NKJV.*

In **Mark 3:23–27**, Jesus declared the importance of unity among brethren. *23 So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot*

stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

SOLUTION TO THE SIN OF DIVISION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Brethren, the only way out of the Sin of division in the local congregation are as follow.

1. Absolute repentance from the Sin of division
2. We must avoid all forms of barriers – such as ethnicity and followership
3. Let sincere Brotherly Love continue
4. We must all submit to the authority of Christ.

Conclusion

Brethren, if we are one in Christ Jesus, then there should be no place for strife in the Body of Christ – “*the Church*” and we must not individually or collectively be part of such ungodly act. Finally, Christians should be disciple of Christ bringing light and love of God to a dark and lost world, and not division.