

ENCOURAGING CONGREGATION UNITY, PEACE AND LOVE

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The word of God gives us great comfort and consolation at all time, if only we read, study and understand it.

The early Christian church were described in unique Christian life and worship.

Acts 2:44, 46 - Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.

Such terms used to describe their commitment to God and to themselves at the early life of the church is important to us today while the church matures.

A congregation is considered mature when the biblical leadership, elders, deacons, ministers, teachers, members as in church of Christ, Grey Street, Warri, are put in place.

Ephesians 4:11 - And He Himself gave some to be apostles,

some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

In Acts 2:44; 4:32, such terms fellowship together, were together, had all things common, from house to house, were of one heart and one soul, but they had all things common e.t.c suggested unity, peace and bond of love.

This shows no sign of discrimination against one another, backbiting, bad names calling for one another.

This should be our striving in this Grey church of Christ, Warri.

There was unity, peace and love in each congregation of the Lord's body and there is the universal body's unity, peace and love.

In John 17:20-22, Jesus prayed for unity among us at the congregational and universal levels of the body.

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

Definition

Unity is not the absence of differences in understanding the word but harmonizing the differences from the Scriptures to make, establish unity of ourselves. In which case, biblical superior reference points put to rest or silence opinions, unscriptural implications or inference and wrongly taught lessons.

It is the place of the *spiritual and truthful* worshippers of God to understand that ***when God had spoken, we obey!***

Peace on the other hand is accepting, bearing one another in a perceived wrong, without bitterness in the main time.

Love is the openness and concern and care from the heart in spite of wrong done.

Unity, peace and love flow together. A closer examination and study of the New Testament affirm this in ***Ephesians 4:1-4.***

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with

longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring 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.

Where the tripartite (unity, peace and love) work together in a congregation's worship, organization, decision or policy implementation, the congregation would grow from strength to strength and her maturity would be outstanding.

Unity, peace and love are key ingredients in the worship and works of God.

Unity as Christ wants it; peace as Christ gave it and love as God demonstrated to us and propagated by the apostles – ***John 14:27; 16:33.***

John 3:16-17 - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

1 John 3:11-12 - *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his*

works were evil and his brother's righteous.

1 John 4:20 - *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

THINGS THAT ENCOURAGE UNITY, PEACE AND LOVE

These three ingredients should be fostered or maintained in the congregation amongst ourselves.

Our youths are commendable in their striving - *keep it up please.*

- *Lowliness* (humble) and *gentleness* (meekness), *longsuffering* (patient), *forbearing* (tolerate) one another in love and bond of peace.

Now is the time for all of us to develop, improve or move on these qualities. Yes, we have to increase the speed. ***Ephesians 4:2*** - *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.*

- *Kindness, tender-hearted, spirit of forgiving one another.*

God find us a people to himself not because of our righteousness but demonstrated the above ingredients toward us.

Romans 5:8 - *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

We should therefore do all these in the congregation and beyond because we are light.

Ephesians 4:32 - *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*

Matthew 5:16 - *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

- Arising from the things to do to maintain unity, peace and love is the fact that all bitterness, wrath, anger, evil speaking, clamour (noisy), malice should be put away from amongst is.

Does anyone feel offended over any matter treated or ongoing?

Respectfully, faithfully meet those that are concerned than grumble!

- We must practically demonstrate unity, peace and love all times by doing what everyone ought to do well and properly.

Does it bother you to visit, call, asked after absentees after worship, fellowship?

This is the time not to be complacent (*self-satisfied*) or selfish about heaven's glory!

Many of us are too friendly with denominations' worldly glory than the church and members.

If a brother could not meet your request, such is not wicked; it may be his or her *downtime. The rich also cry!*

- Prayer for one another in the believe that you pray until something happens (*push*). Yes, that is the true spirit of the brotherhood. Our prayers must *always, not doubting, for one another and according to God's will. Prayer does a lot in the church and in the individual's life. Let us practice it please.*

CONCLUSION

We need unity, peace and love to excelling in the work of

God in this congregation, as we think on ***Philippians 2:1-4.***

Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Thank you and God bless.