

Joshua 22 — “Practical Lessons for Preserving Unity Among the People of God!”

How good & how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in UNITY (Ps 133.1)

We are to actively serve one another until we all attain to the UNITY of the Spirit (Eph 4.13)

We are to be putting on love which is the perfect bond of UNITY (Col 3.14)

We must be DILIGENT to preserve the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4.3)

Christ's prayer is for us to be perfected in UNITY (John 17.23)

A Sure Path to Destroy Unity. The Way to Guarantee Conflict & Disharmony:

1. Act on hearsay and rumor!

2. React without checking the facts!

“He that answers a matter before he hears it, it is a folly and a shame unto him” (Proverbs 18:13).

3. Make accusations!

4. Bear false witness to others!

THESIS — 4 very practical lessons for us **so that we may preserve unity among the people of God!**

I. PRIORITIZE OBEDIENCE! (1-9)

Note all the verbs (actions/emphasis!) in verse 5 — Be very careful to...

II. SHUN ACCUSATIONS! (10-20)

The building of the “altar” —

God is jealous for his own institutions; we should be so too, and afraid of every thing that looks like, or leads to idolatry. (Matthew Henry).

But! We must be careful: unguarded zeal without patience, humility, & gentleness can lead to disaster
quickly!

Verses 10-12 — The downward spiral of accusations!

1. they *hear* about it (11a)

2. they *talk* about it (11b)

3. they make *assumptions* about it (v.11c)

4. they get *emotionally worked up* because of it (12a)

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5. they go to war because of it (12b)

6. they make *accusations* because of it (vv.13-20)

Beware! Assuming motives in someone is an arrogant sin of ‘playing God’ because only God knows the motives.

“It is an act of loving care to believe good things about your brother until you have evidence to believe otherwise. This means we should read and listen to folks charitably and extend an assumption of good motives to them for as long as we can. In the Kingdom of Christ, relationships are too important to think the worst of people. Often we're tempted to jump to the worst possible scenario. Another way to frame this would be to treat others with the charity you would like to be treated (Matt 7:12).” (Heath Lambert)

III. RESPOND PATIENTLY! (21-29)

Prov 15.1 - a gentle answer turns away wrath

Prov 14.29 - he who is slow to anger has great understanding.

Prov 19.11 - a man's discretion/wisdom makes him slow to anger

James 1.19 - quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger!

❖ What can we learn when we're on the *receiving* end of being accused? 3 lessons!

1. Immediately **beseech** your God (vv.21-22)

2. Honestly **affirm** your integrity (vv.23-25)

3. Humbly **state** your case (vv.26-29)

Prov 15.18 - the slow to anger calms a dispute.;

IV. CONTINUE HARMONIOUSLY! (30-34)

- The Israelite leaders hear their explanation, receive it, welcome it & reconcile peacefully, joyfully, & worshipfully!
- See what listening will do! They listen, they respond, they preserve unity (cf. James 1:19-20).

“Who can estimate all the misery that has come in almost every age -- both public and private -- from hasty suspicions of evil, which a little patience, a little inquiry, a little opportunity of explanation, might have once averted??” (William Blaikie)

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS TO PRAY FOR IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. pray for God's glory to permeate your church
2. pray for unity in the church
3. pray for almighty power in the preaching of the Word
4. pray for the administration of the ordinances -- baptism & Lord's supper
5. pray for biblical discipline and restoration
6. pray for repentance in the flock
7. pray for biblical forgiveness to be lavished to one another
8. pray for Christ-centered fellowship
9. pray for spiritual growth and maturation
10. pray for the conversion of the lost
11. pray for revival in our hearts and among us
12. pray for the suffering, persecuted, and those who are mourning
13. pray for the church leaders -- elders/deacons
14. pray for Christ's soon return & our readiness & waiting for him
15. pray for submission to Christ's leaders in the church
16. pray for a thankful spirit to reside among us
17. pray for workers to go out in Christ's harvest and labor for souls
18. pray for increased evangelistic efforts
19. pray for more people to serve God as missionaries globally
20. pray for reverence in the house of God
21. pray for more praying in and among God's people
22. pray for the marriages
23. pray for the parents
24. pray for the students
25. pray for the singles
26. pray for the widows
27. pray for the afflicted
28. pray for dependency on the Spirit of God
29. pray for commitment to the sufficiency of the Word in all things
30. pray for the musicians to be holy, pure and to serve without distracting
31. pray for the nursery workers and teachers to be patient and proclaim the gospel
32. pray for the true conversions of our youth
33. pray for fathers to lead in family worship at home with the children
34. pray for the flock to sacrificially practice the 'one anothers'
35. pray for generous, financial giving as a worshipful act in the church
36. pray for spiritual strength and protection from the evil one and his schemes
37. pray for the catechizing of our young people resulting in their conversions
38. pray for the exaltation of God's Word and Christ's gospel in your church
39. pray for the next generation that rises up to cling to Christ & follow Him
40. pray for those without work and in need of employment
41. pray for those who strive with wayward, unbelieving, godless children
42. pray for a greater longing for heaven
43. pray for a greater understanding of hell that would prompt urgent evangelism
44. pray for the Lord's soon coming to catch-up believers and take us to heaven
45. pray for enough suffering and hardship to keep us humble and dependent
46. pray for sexual purity among all of God's people at the church
47. pray for God's people to mortify sin quickly, decisively, violently & willingly
48. pray for increased love for Christ and an increased ravishing by His love
49. pray for more exposure to the gospel and more love for this message of redemption
50. pray for more filling and power of the Holy Spirit in and among God's people
51. pray for the Spirit to quicken souls during the preaching of God's Word
52. pray for believers to biblically counsel one another with God's sufficient Word
53. pray for the marriages of your elders to be strong, healthy, pure, and priority.
54. pray for God's people to wrestle with God in fervent prayer daily
55. pray for God to use the open-air proclamation of the gospel to quicken dead souls to life
56. pray for the Word to go forth without distraction and pray for earnest focus during corporate worship
57. pray for God's people to all prepare diligently ahead of time for corporate worship and to be ready to worship God
58. pray for intimacy, power, fellowship, and rejuvenation to come from the corporate prayer meeting of the church

37 Ways to Love One Another

by Paul Tautges

A local church is not built by one man, or even a few men, but by every believer being actively involved in ministry through evangelizing the lost people in their lives and serving their fellow Christians. A quick glance at the practice of the New Testament church reveals that they thought *very little* about programs and *very much* about relationships.

Consider the disciple-making that would naturally take place in the life of a local church if every believer would practice the loving, one-another ministry that the early churches first read about in the instructions they received from the apostles:

1. Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10).
2. Give preference to one another (Rom. 12:10).
3. Be of the same mind toward one another (Rom. 12:16).
4. Accept one another by withholding judgment (Rom. 14:1).
5. Accept one another by showing deference (Rom. 14:1–5; 15:7).
6. Esteem [highly regard] one another in love (Rom. 14:5; Phil. 2:3).
7. Build up one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thes. 5:11).
8. Counsel one another (Rom. 15:14).
9. Serve one another by showing deference in matters of liberty (Gal. 5:13).
10. Bear one another's sin burdens (Gal. 6:2).
11. Be gentle with one another (Eph. 4:2).
12. Be kind to one another so as to preserve unity (Eph. 4:32).
13. Speak truth to one another (Eph. 4:25; Col 3:9).
14. Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21).
15. Show compassion to one another (Col. 3:12).
16. Bear with the inherent sinfulness of one another (Col. 3:13).
17. Forgive one another (Col. 3:13).
18. Use Spirit-filled, Word-saturated music to teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).
19. Comfort one another with the hope of Christ's return (1 Thes. 4:18).
20. Encourage one another (1 Thes. 5:11).
21. Live in peace with one another (1 Thes. 5:13).
22. Seek good for one another (1 Thes. 5:15).
23. Encourage one another to forsake unbelief and hardness of heart (Heb. 3:13).
24. Stimulate one another to spiritual growth (Heb. 10:24).
25. Encourage one another by faithful participation in your local church (Heb. 10:25).
26. Confess sins to one another (James 5:16).
27. Pray for one another's spiritual and physical healing (James 5:16).
28. Be long-suffering and patient toward one another (1 Peter 4:8; Eph. 4:2).
29. Be hospitable to one another without complaint (1 Peter 4:9).
30. Serve one another (1 Peter 4:10; Gal. 5:13).
31. Act in humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5).
32. Show holy affection to one another (1 Peter 5:14).
33. Participate in the holy walk with one another (1 John 1:7).
34. Refuse to become resentful toward one another (1 John 3:11–12).
35. Give sacrificially to meet one another's needs (1 John 3:16–17).
36. Fight fear together by growing in love (1 John 4:18).
37. Walk in truth together (1 John 3:18; 2 John 1:5).

The Christian life is all about relationships. It's God's design for our personal growth, which then translates into church growth—the real kind. Loving one another is a powerful evangelistic tool, as Jesus says: “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

PRAYER MEETING & PRAISE Guide:**1. PRAISE!***Sing: His Robes For Mine*

His robes for mine: what cause have I for dread?
 God's daunting Law Christ mastered in my stead.
 Faultless I stand with righteous works not mine,
 Saved by my Lord's vicarious death and life.

I cling to Christ, and marvel at the cost:
 Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God.
 Bought by such love, my life is not my own.
 My praise -- my all -- shall be for Christ alone!

Praise:

- Praise God the Father for His electing, predestining, justifying, and sovereign work in your salvation.
- Praise God the Son for His redemption, His atonement, His propitiation, His forgiveness, and His communication to us in the Word. Indeed, He holds us in His hands securely & eternally.
- Praise God the Spirit for His effectual, irresistible call, His regeneration, His sealing and securing us till glory.
- Praise God for His attributes (sovereignty, holiness, justice, love, mercy, righteousness, grace, omniscience, power, eternity, unchangeableness, faithfulness, self-existence)

2. PETITION!*Sing: Give Me One Pure and Holy Passion*

Give me one pure and holy passion.
 Give me one magnificent obsession.
 Give me one glorious ambition for my life:
 To know and follow hard after You!

To know and follow hard after You,
 To grow as Your disciple in the Truth,
 This world is empty, pale, and poor
 Compared to knowing You my Lord.
 Lead me on, and I will run after You.
 Lead me on, and I will run after You!

Pray:

- Pray through the one another's (see pages 3 & 4 for examples)
- Pray specifically for great hunger & passion for God.
- Pray for revival in *our* hearts, revival in our city, in our nation, across the world.

3. PREPARATION!*Sing: Soldiers of Christ Arise*

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
 And put your armor on,
 Strong in the strength which God supplies,
 Through His eternal Son;
 Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
 And in His mighty pow'r,
 Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
 Is more than conqueror.

Leave no unguarded place,
 No weakness of the soul,
 Take every virtue, every grace,
 And fortify the whole.
 To keep your armor bright
 Attend with constant care,
 Still walking in your Captain's sight
 And watching unto prayer.

Pray:

- Pray for humility & pray for gentleness & pray that we would be of the same mind!
- Pray for patience & pray for communication & pray for diligent preserving of peace!
- Pray for a spirit of “love believing the best” & not being quick to assume motives! Lead us not into temptation!
- Pray for preparation against the fiery darts of the Evil One that may come against us (Eph 6.10-20; 2 Cor 2.11).