

## A CALL TO UNITY

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Key verses: John 17:3; 20-23

### Introduction

*John 17:3 NIV*

*"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

Eternal life is that we know God; to have a relationship with our Creator. That we may know Him.

John 17 is special because what we are reading is a conversation between Jesus and the Father. Jesus turns His attention from his disciples to the Father.

It's split up into 3 parts.

Jesus prays for:

- Himself
- Prays for his disciples
- Prays for us.

The focus will be on Jesus' prayer for us - John 17:20-23

Jesus' prayer was personal.

### Jesus' prayer for us

*John 17:20-23*

*<sup>20</sup>"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

Jesus is praying that we will become one, like Jesus and the Father are one.

Do we understand how connected the Father and Son are? Jesus said that He did nothing apart from the Father.

This is serious business. Jesus prayed it.

We need to be unified as one body. Then the world will believe that Jesus has come.

If Jesus wants us to be unified then the devil will do anything he can to divide us because he knows the importance of unity and loving each other.

The division we see:

The Christian faith is one of the most divided religions in the world.

We see division among leaders, among leaders and the rest of the church.

The devil is attacking family, breaking up marriages, relationships between parents and kids, between siblings.

One of the things that cause division is racism. We must set the example to fight this thing. We must not look down upon another because they look different to me.

The Lord wants to deal with this. It starts with repentance. Acknowledge the problem.

It starts with us. It starts with the individual.

**The greatest command** "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and **with all your mind**" and the **second is like it**, to love my neighbour as myself.

*Psalm 133:1 NIV "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"*

Quotes from Michael Eaton:

"The love between the Father and Son is to show itself in the relationships between us."

"This is what will lead to unity."

**"The** Father will be in the Son, the Son will be in the disciples, the results will be unity of heart and spirit among God's people. It will be a powerfully visible love that will impress **the world.**"

This is God's design - for us to live life together and be a family. The relationship between the Father and Son should be seen in us.

We should love and care for one another in our actions. Be kind, gracious, patient, to lay down my life for the person next to me.

What is the goal of Jesus' prayer?

- That we become perfectly one as the Father and Son are one.

What is the result of our unity?

- Our love for God and each other will grow and the world will know that Jesus has come.

Illustration: Exalted conference. Everyone had the same goal. It's attractive when you see people pursue one thing together.

How do we accomplish this unity?

Blueprint in the Bible:

*Acts 2:42-47 NIV*

<sup>42</sup>**They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.** <sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Definition of Devotion:

**'love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person or activity.'**

Apostles teaching - reading the word together. (Illustration: the girl at Gyoza)

Fellowship - living life together, spending time with each other outside of the Sunday meeting and organised ministry gatherings. This is why community is so important, being connected relationally. When was the last time you connected with someone from church outside of Sunday or a group?

Breaking of bread - What was the scene of Jesus and the last supper? The table speaks of intimacy. Inviting people to eat at your table and take communion and remember Jesus is a big deal, it's a deeper level of love.

Prayer - We need to pray more together as a body, corporately or in smaller groups. This is what unites our spirits. If you want to learn how to pray, find someone who prays. You will learn.

Illustration: Small group - 60-80 people got baptised.

*Acts 4:32-35 NIV*

<sup>32</sup>Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. <sup>33</sup>And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup>**and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.**

They were radical. They sold property to give to others. Pursue Jesus together and one another.

Significance of this Scripture:

- They loved God
- They loved people
- They were making disciples
- Building community
- They were on Mission together.

Illustration: Playing as a team with a common goal brings us together.

*Ephesians 4:1-6 NIV*

*<sup>1</sup>As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Implementation:

What are we going to do to build relationships?

Start small! Make a friend. Take someone out for coffee.

There is a call for us to be unified. Community group is one of those ways!