

## Agreement and the Family of God

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: The Power of Agreement

**Text: 1 Peter 3:8 (AMP)**

God designed us to do life together, from marriage to the local church. There is nothing quite as beautiful and powerful as a local church that is in unity and agreement with God and one another. This is why Satan loves to sow discord in the body of Christ. He does this in subtle ways through our traditions and in big ways through our disagreements and hurts, real or perceived.

### Several ways Satan causes God's people to struggle with agreement

- Legalism - this is where a local church is more concerned about upholding rules than operating in grace. Legalists do understand that sin is sin, but they are graceless and tactless about loving and restoring people. These are people more concerned with the letter of the law than with the Spirit of Truth.
- Secular humanism - when the church tries to conform to the culture of the world. The concern is to fit in and be relevant and tolerant. These churches long to be seeker sensitive instead of Spirit sensitive. They have forgot that the church is the body of Christ and is a place of worship, learning and discipleship. It is not a place of entertainment.
- Traditionalism - is keeping the status quo; it is more concerned with keeping people happy and less concerned about being holy. While rituals and traditions have their place they do not define if a person is saved or not. Traditionalism has a great deal in common with ritualism. It is doing things the same way they have always been done instead of trying new things. The Message - not the Method - is sacred.
- Mysticism - is when people are genuinely hungry for God but instead of waiting for the true power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them, they act out in the flesh. This is when they are looking at things so “deeply” that they are actually dabbling in the occult and not in the Spirit. This is a problem in all “religions”. Even the Jewish faith has something called Kabbalah. Christians who are most affect by this are Catholics and Charismatics.
- Denominationalism - all too often we are separated by our camps. It is a sad thing how the Baptists and the Pentecostals judge one another. It is disappointing how those of the reformed camp and the Calvinists and Charismatics distrust one another because one believes in the cessation of the gifts and the others believe in the fullness of the Spirit. If we would come together our witness would be powerful.

We can counter the attacks of the enemy by simply finding agreement in the things that really matter and build quality relationships. – This is something that the Billy Graham Association did for years. We are not in competition with each other, we are a family.

- ❖ One way we counter the attacks of the enemy on the local church is to resist the **religious** spirit. There is nothing quite as wonderful as a true friend. There is nothing quite as disappointing as a false friend. Job had resisted the devil and endured the attack of hell and survived. His friends and family were no help as they responded religiously but not kindly. **Job 19:13-21 (NLT)** Job's three friends were caring enough to visit. Their motive was right but their **method** was lacking. They moved from comforters to critics. They accused Job of causing his own problems instead of Satan. Eliphaz said, "You have sinned, you're being chastened". Bildad, "you need to **repent**." Zophar said, "you deserve more punishment". **Job 8:1-6**

Job called these so called "friends" worthless companions and miserable comforters. All of these men were religious types. They all claimed God gave them wisdom and insight but their "comfort" was brutal. Religious people forget that Jesus came to **heal** the sick, mend the broken and to set the captives free. **Luke 4:18-19**

Eliphaz even claimed to have an encounter with God about Job. **Job 4:12-21** The Bible tells us to **test** the Spirits. **1 John 4:1-6** There are false teachers and prophets and all demonic spirits are **lying** spirits. God confronted these friends for not representing God well. **Job 42:7-8** We must learn to speak in wisdom and allow the Holy Spirit to shape our words before we deliver them.

- ❖ To bring agreement to the body of Christ we must guard against being **judgmental**. **Job 8:6** If Job had been in known sin a rebuke and restoration would have been in order. Bildad accused a righteous man of being unrighteous.

His friends became "know-it-alls". They thought that they had all the answers and that Job needed a "**new** revelation". **Job 11:4-6** Trite answers and religious cliches do nothing for a broken heart. We all need friends who will weep with us and pray with us and just let us know that they care. Most people don't need another book. They need a shoulder to lean on and a hand to hold.

#### The kind of people that the body of Christ needs

- People who **heal** not hurt. When he needed long term compassion, he only got it short term. **Job 2:13** For seven days they got it right. If only they had been quiet longer or uplifting.
- People who **comfort** not torment. **Job 19:2** Friends need words that help, not criticism or sarcasm when they are in pain.
- People who bring **strength** not bring you down further. **Job 16:4-5**
- People who are faithful to **remember** those who are suffering. **Proverbs 17:17**  
To often we forget about those who are suffering after the initial help. Most of those who "slip through the cracks" are often those we have **forgotten** about or how it is to suffer. The divorced are forgotten by their married friends, the sick and home bound are forgotten by those who can get around. The one who has failed is often only pitied but never restored.

~ Mark Twain – The proper office of a friend is to side with you when you are in the wrong. Nearly anybody will side with you when you are in the right.

Job had a better outcome than he did at first. **Job 42:10-17** What Job discovered is that God is our **Redeemer**. **Job 19:25**

We need a fresh understanding of how vital we each are to one another. The church is a place where we are to grow, learn, **love** and work together in unity as a body. We all belong and contribute to one another. **Ephesians 4:1-16**  
Ephesians offers us an easy outline to understand the bond we have as a church.

- 1) Unity is the **glue** that holds us together. Unity is only possible in the atmosphere of true family and friendship. This unity happens in two ways:
  - a. The unity of the **Spirit** and
  - b. Unity of the **faith** and knowledge of the Son of God.

Unity begins with the work of the Holy Spirit and moves to a unity of what we know and believe. All too often we teach people what to believe and what to do before we help them to understand **who** they are. This is why so many people have the wrong understanding that church is something that you do and believe not who we are in Christ and as a family.

- 2) Divine **gifts** are the equipment that God gives to each person. It is important that each of us understand how we fit and work together. We need to celebrate the uniqueness and giftedness of every one of us. **Romans 12:4-5**
- 3) When we know where we **fit**, personal growth and growth of the Body of Christ is inevitable. **Ephesians 4:16 (NLT)**

Just like every part of our natural bodies need each other part, we in the body of Christ **need** what each one brings to the body. We need the church because the church is **us**. We all need the affection and love of others. We also need to be appreciated for who we uniquely are. No one is **disposable** everyone needs to know that they are a part of something and indispensable. **Romans 12:10 (NIV)**

~ Robert Lewis Stevenson – So long as we are loved by others, I would almost say that we are indispensable: no man is useless while he has a friend.

Sometimes in every church or in any family there is division and strife. This is how Satan **works** - divide and conquer. We must deal with this ruthlessly. Agreement and restoration must always be the goal. **Matthew 18:15-20** All relationships need **boundaries** but not walls. Agreement tears down walls and creates boundaries that are as beautiful as the ocean and the shoreline or mountains and the skyline. **Ephesians 2:13-18**

God made sure that the walls that separated us from Him came down. We must take down the walls in our heart and lives that keep us from loving, knowing and appreciating each other.