

THE ARGUMENT FOR UNITY

THE VALUE OF
FELLOWSHIP AND
INTENTIONALITY
IN THE BODY



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15 For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a bondservant[c] but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. 18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.

Philemon 1:15-19

In Philemon 1:15–19, Paul made it clear that his main purpose in writing to Philemon was to resolve the conflict between the two men and encourage them to live in fellowship with one another.

The Apostolic Study Bible states, “By offering to pay the debt Onesimus was unable to pay, Paul modeled Jesus Christ, who paid the price for our sins though He was without guilt” (Apostolic Study Bible, note for Philemon 17–18).

Paul was so serious about bringing these two men together that he was willing to pay whatever debts Onesimus might have incurred. Some would say this was unnecessary.

Although Paul wasn’t responsible for any wrongdoing, he was willing to take responsibility for making it right.

- Paul’s response was because he knew the ultimate end of our calling to be the church is to be in Christian community.
- This calling was apparent to Paul, as well as the other apostles.
- They actively worked to instruct and help any that believed, regardless of their affiliation.



Let me be clear, this community does not begin and end with this group. It does not begin and end with this church, city, district, or even organization. Even in our misunderstandings and differences in belief, the Body of Christ is made up of a host of believers that do not fall into our narrow classifications.

The Apostles of the church weren't concerned with denominations, cultural affiliations, or anything social class systems. When they saw the church, they ministered to the church. Paul wasn't concerned in Acts 19 that these fellow disciples hadn't so much as heard of the Holy Ghost, he only cared that he now had the opportunity to help fellow believers learn and grow.

Above all else, Paul cared about equipping the church in all of its forms in a way that would shake the world at its foundation.

We are entering a new chapter in this church in which our concern doesn't fall on appearance or perfection.

Just like the church of Acts:

- We see the need for more churches.
- We see the need to equip and encourage believers.
- We see the need for granting people responsibilities in ministry "before" their determined time.

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

John 4:35

The church isn't in need of botanists, masters' of agriculture, or economists to tell us when is the best time to plant, water, or harvest. We require laborers in their dirty denim and muddy boots. We need people that are simply willing to do the work that is set before the church in this desperate hour of need.



22 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants[a] to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them

stroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 22:1-14

The hard truth for people to swallow comes in verse 10 when they went out and gathered those that were both good and bad, when what really mattered was whether those good and bad people had donned their white robes.

