

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – Sept 03, 2023

Theme: Romans: The Power of God at Work in us. **Topic:** Christian Unity.

Main Texts: Romans 15:1-13

Key verse: Romans 15:5 – “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.” (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: Apostle Paul continues in Romans 15, what he had started discussing in Romans 14. Romans 14 opens with, ‘Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong’ It is a similar refrain that he opens Romans 15 with: “We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this...” (Romans 14:1 and 15:1 NLT). Notice what both passages referred to above do not say: They do not say the ‘weak’ must become strong before they can be accepted. Neither does it require the ‘strong’ among us to become like the ‘weak.’ Instead, it says that “Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind towards each other that Christ Jesus had.” (Romans 15:5 NIV). Interestingly, these verses point us to Christ – the one Person we are all agreed on. It is not about unity in mode, place, or customs of worship.

1. Read Romans 15:1-5; Philippians 2:2. (a) Romans 15:5 invites believers to seek to have the ‘same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had,’ How would you define Christian unity in the light of this passage? (b) Based on how you defined Christian unity, do you think Christian unity will one day eliminate denominations in the body of Christ? Why or why not? (c) In what ways will this kind of Christian unity impact on the problems of tribalism, elitism, classism, and other divisive tendencies in the church?

Romans 15:1-13 outlines our role, as believers in promoting Christian unity in the Body of Christ. Those who are strong are to be considerate of those who are not, we are not to please ourselves; we must be sensitive and gracious toward one another; we must accept each other just as Christ has accepted us; we must pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another (Romans 15:1,2,7). 1 Corinthians 8:9 add that we must be careful not to put stumbling blocks in a brother’s or sister’s way as she or he seeks to grow in faith. Having done all these, we must recognize that true unity is not something that we can achieve solely by our efforts. This is because Christian unity is about unity of the Spirit and unity of faith (Ephesians 4:3; 11-13). No wonder Apostle Paul makes the pursuit of Christian unity a prayer point (Romans 15:5, 13). True unity comes from God (Romans 15:5). So, we must seek and ask Him for it.

2. (a) Two times, Apostle Paul prays in this short passage on Christian unity. What does he pray for and what does that tell us about this matter of Christian unity? (b) How do the specific attributes Apostle Paul prayed for in 2a help us in pursuit of christian unity.? (c) What will VFC look like if we are each growing in these attributes? What can each of us do to promote this?

Christian unity is the desire of God for the Body of Christ. Jesus prayed for it (John 17:20-23). The benefit of Christian unity is that God is glorified, the gospel is advanced, and the Body of Christ is blessed, filled with joy, peace, and hope of eternity with Christ (Psalm 133:1, Romans 15:13). Christian unity gives the Church a powerful witness to the world and is expressed through common love, purpose, and mission (John 13:35). God-glorifying unity is important for our testimony to a world that is so fractured, contentious and is perishing.

3. (a) Christian unity is beneficial. Let participants mention ways Christian unity benefits our homes, church (VFC), and society. (b) Read Ephesians 4: 11-13. What does God give His Church for the purpose of promoting Christian unity? And how have you seen these ministerial gifts operating in VFC? (c) How should these benefits motivate us and affect how we pray?

Prayer: Dear God, we pray that You will give us the perseverance and encouragement we need to pursue Christian unity. We pray that this unity will result in glory to You our one True God and Father. Amen.