

PRACTICING A ONE ANOTHER CULTURE

Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Title: Live in Harmony with One Another

Date preached: October 11, 2026

Opening prayer: Our God, we pray that we may enter together into fellowship with you – Father, Son and Spirit – and as we experience fellowship with you we may also develop fellowship with one another so that we might reflect the love and care for One Another that brings you honor and us joy. Amen

Opening question: Were you able to welcome someone new this week or perhaps welcome someone you already knew in a new and different way in response to last week's sermon?

Sermon Focus: Harmony is an act of tuning into the Messianic voice of Jesus. An early step toward this tuning to Jesus is humbly submitting our voice to His voice. Our harmony joins the always harmonized voices of the Father and the Spirit who are always in tune with Jesus. When we sense a dissonance in worship or as we read scripture, we can ask the Holy Spirit – the Church's spiritual voice coach to help us find the right tune. As a church, we strive to achieve the mindset of Christ as we seek to reverberate the voice of Jesus, as the church has no voice of its own.

Sermon Question:

- What part of the sermon has stayed with you since Sunday?
OR What challenged, encouraged, or surprised you in the sermon?

Scripture reading: Romans 15:5-6

Optional expanded reading: Romans 12:16; Philippians 2:1-4, and 2:5-16; 1 Corinthians 1:10 and 2:16.

Scripture Context: This week we pay a return visit to Romans chapter 15, looking at the two verses immediately preceding those we studied last week. Remembering that chapters 12-15 deal with the individual and corporate life of Jesus' followers who are called to 'present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God' (Romans 12:1), Paul is focusing on the mindset of individual believers which permits them to participate in the church community in such a way that God the Father is glorified. In these verses, Paul is focused on one specific area of our bodies – our minds. To fully understand these verses, it is helpful to recognize a bit more about the church in Rome to which Paul is writing. As we mentioned last week, the Roman church was composed of Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. In addition to the gnostic heresy – separation of mind and body – this church faced a subtler, but conceivably more damaging threat to building community – the fundamental difference in the way Jewish thinkers and Roman thinkers (often called 'Greeks' by Paul because of the dominance of Greek philosophy in the Roman empire) perceive the mind. The

theologian Tom Dallis observes: “The ancient Hebrew world was not primarily concerned with abstract ideas... It was concerned with life. With faithfulness. With walking rightly before God.” Of Greek thinkers, Dallis writes “Greek thought focused on defining truth intellectually... Truth was something you grasped with the mind. Wisdom was something you contemplated.” How could these fundamentally different worldviews be brought together in the church? A solution could not be found by subverting either worldview to the other. Instead, Paul exhorts both Jewish and Greek thinkers to submit their minds to the mind of Christ. Western culture as we know it today is far more aligned with Greek philosophies and thought – Truth is relative; Individual rather than collective achievement is celebrated; We are what we manifest in our minds. Paul’s words challenge us to build community by seeking the mind of Christ together.

Word in focus: ὁμοθυμαδόν – Omothemathon or Homothymadon (oh-mow-thee-mah-THON) Of one mind or purpose, in accord with. This is an adjective composed of two Greek roots – Omo (one and the same) and Thema (Mind or Purpose). In Romans 15:5-6 the Apostle Paul prays that the ‘God of endurance and encouragement may give you the same mind with one another (αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις) to be in one accord (ὁμοθυμαδόν) with Christ Jesus. In this sentence, Paul’s prayer is not for total agreement on all differences in the community, but rather submission of those preferences to the mind (will) of Jesus for the purpose of giving glory to God together. The expanded reading listed above gives other examples of this tuning to the mindset of Jesus elsewhere in scripture.

Questions:

1. What is harmony in music? How is it different than singing in unison? What needs to be agreed on for harmony to work out?
2. Read Romans 12:16 and 15:5-6. What do you think living in harmony means? (Some translations say ‘be of the same mind’) What do we have to agree on?
3. Read also Philippians 2:1-4. What actions and character traits does Paul mention along with living in harmony? How do these traits assist us in living in harmony?
4. Who do you consider unworthy to associate with? What reasons do you have? How does this command of harmony challenge these reasons?
5. Since you will never think exactly like another member of the family of God, how does being of the same mind work out in daily life?
6. What practices are doing that help you get in tune with Jesus?

Sharing life together: This week pray for God to give you the name of someone with whom you’ve had difficult interactions in the past. Pray for that person each day and ask God to provide a way for you to find harmony under Jesus with that person.

Closing prayer: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.