

The Church Today (Part 6) **The Fellowship of the Church** (I Corinthians 1:10-16)

Introduction: We have been talking about the doctrine of "The Church Today". The last time we were together we talked about the function of the church from I Corinthians 12, and Romans 12, and Ephesians 4.

We acknowledged; everybody is somebody in the Lord's body. And we have seen the members of the body of Christ must work and walk together to be the body of Christ in a dynamic way, sharing His life on this earth.

Now the message today, as we wrap up this very important series of messages on the doctrine of the church today, is about *the fellowship of the church*, the fellowship of the body.

The apostle Paul is writing to the church at Corinth. Paul comes to talk about division in this passage and he lays the responsibility for division at the very door of the church at Corinth itself. In this passage, Paul addresses several things...

I. The responsibility for division:

A. Whose job it's not to keep down division – It's not just the pastor or church leaders job alone.

B. Whose job is it - *That is the job of every member of this church.*

The Bible encourages us to do that in many different places.

1. We read in Philippians 1:27 -
2. In Ephesians 4:30-32 - *We are to guard that unity.*
3. In Romans 15:6 Paul says *that we are to glorify God with one mind and with one mouth.*
4. And 1 Pe. 3:8 "...*finally be ye all of one mind.*
5. In Galatians 3 ...*we are all one in Christ Jesus.*

God says it is your job and my job to maintain the fellowship in the body of Christ and keep down divisions within the body. *That is the responsibility of every child of God.*

No church is perfect. Remember who the church is: It is the called out, Spirit filled believers, who have been bonded together by the Holy Spirit, for the purpose fellowship and ministry.

And because the church is full of imperfect, forgiven sinners, there is never going to be a perfect church.

But as the church we have the unity of the faith created by the Holy Spirit, and we are at all costs to protect that unity of the faith.

That is the responsibility for division, it is yours and it is mine to keep down!

II. The reason for division: (vv. 11-12)

A. Contentions – (v. 11)

1. Contentions are always the first step toward the division of a church fellowship.
2. Paul used a similar word is used in Rom. 1:29.

3. Another word is found in Gal. 5:19-20 *when Paul talks about the works of the flesh in the life of a believer as against the works of the Spirit.*

Any time there is division caused by contention it comes from one of two groups of people. There are saved and unsaved folks who attend church (Mt.13:24-29)

If you want to know what God thinks of folks who cause contention in the body read Proverbs 6:16-19. *"God hates him who sows discord among the brethren."*

B. Divisiveness - Now there were four groups of division in the church at Corinth. (v.12)

1. Number one; Those who said I am a Paul.
2. The second group said, we like Apollos.
3. A Third group said I am of Cephas (Peter).
4. There was the fourth group, they said, well I am of Christ.
(Sounds super spiritual)- They were filled with spiritual pride.

Paul wrote and he said, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gives the increase.* (1 Cor. 3:6)

But a second reason there is division in the church is...

C. There is division caused by Christ.

1. John said in Jn 7:43
2. That means when God's Word is preached, and sins are named, and wrong motives are pointed out, and Christians are called to repentance, that if Christian people don't repent and put Jesus on the throne of their life, there will come division in the fellowship of the church. (2 Tim. 4:3)

III. The result of division: (v13)

The Apostle Paul asks *three questions in this verse that are rhetorical and expected a definite no.* There is but one Savior and one Gospel (Gal 1:6-9). *So, how do we stop division and protect the fellowship?*

IV. The remedy of division:

A. The story of Gideon (Judges 6-8)

B. The Church is to be like the army of Gideon.

(Jgs 20:11) says, *"so all the men of Israel were gathered together against the city as one man."*

1. When we as the church gather together under the lordship of Christ and moving in the power of the Holy Spirit toward the thing God put us here to do, there is no limit to what we can do.
2. That is the remedy for dis-fellowship, and division, is that there be conversion in the name of Christ and commitment to the name of Christ and cooperation in the name of Christ.

Church now is the time! Let's join hands today and cooperate together in the name of Christ.