

5. Outdo One Another in Showing Honor.

- “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” - Rom. 12:10.

- Fairness is not our goal; love is.

Conclusion

Course Schedule

Class 1: Diversity? Unity? For God's Sake!

Class 2: How God Builds Unity and Diversity

Class 3: The Image of God in Our Unity and Diversity

Class 4: God's Purposes for Similarity in the Church

Class 5: Working Through Disunity

Class 6: Counsel for Christians in the Majority

Class 7: Counsel for Christians in the Minority

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Core Seminar

Unity and Diversity in the Local Church

Class 5: Working Through Disunity

Introduction

- Illustration: The Hagia Sofia, A Self-Healing Church.

Acts 6

¹Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ²And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” ⁵And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

1. Pay Attention to What Threatens Church Unity.

- Unity in the church is a gospel issue (Acts 6:2).
- Disunity should not surprise us and we must be on guard (Acts 20:29-30).

2. Take Responsibility to Protect Church Unity.

- Protecting unity is the job of the congregation (Eph. 4:3).
- Implication #1: We must own this unity as *our* responsibility and *our* stewardship.
- Implication #2: Sometimes we protect unity by overlooking certain offenses.
- Implication #3: Addressing disunity is something our leaders can help us do.

3. Be Reluctant to Take Sides.

- The danger of factions in the church (Gal. 5:20; 1 Cor. 11:19).
- Be careful not to implicitly ask our leaders to take sides when we bring problems to them.
- Avoid taking sides by spending time with people on the *other side*.

4. Seek and Recommend Structural Solutions.

- Look for structural, tangible solutions when you sense unity problems.
- Consider overlooking particular offenses that are without specific solutions.
- Pray for our deacons.
- Be careful not to complain (Phil. 2:14).