



**Series: God's Forever Family**  
**"Preserving Unity"**

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**1. Prayer for \_\_\_\_\_ in God's family.**

John 17:20-23: "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

**2. Example of \_\_\_\_\_ in God's family.**

Acts 2:42-47: And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

**3. Examples of \_\_\_\_\_ in God's family.**

Acts 6:1-4: Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

1 Corinthians 3:1-4: And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

**4. Preserving \_\_\_\_\_ in God's family.**

Matthew 5:23-24: Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 18:15-16: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'*

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**MY PLEDGE TO PRESERVING UNITY IN GOD'S FOREVER FAMILY**

1. If I have a problem with another person, I will go to that person privately.
2. When another person has a problem with me, I want them to come to me privately and I will be open minded.
3. When another person has a problem with me, and goes to you, send the person to me. (I'll do the same for you.)
4. If someone hesitates to come to me alone, then take a neutral third party to come with you. (I'll do the same for you.)

Always pray with the other person before and after the meeting. Ask the LORD JESUS CHRIST for wisdom to know His will to preserve unity in God's family.

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Your Name

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Date

# Life Group Homework

## Getting Started

1. When you were growing up, how was conflict normally dealt with in your home? Explain the consequences of this on your family. Explain how this affects you today.
2. What insight, principle or observation from this Sunday's message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or troubling? Explain.

## Digging Deeper

Do you remember the proverb, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another: (Proverbs 27:17). Have you ever thought about how iron sharpens iron? The two pieces rub together, and the rough edges are chipped off.

Sometimes even sparks will fly.

Conflict can be handled in a way that is hurtful, painful and unproductive. But in a family, particularly a church family, conflict is inevitable. It will happen. However, if handled well, conflict can be productive; it will sharpen us, our ministry and mission. It is an opportunity provided by God and He gives us the guidelines to resolve conflict with respect and hope.

How conflict is handled will either promote or damage church unity. It will either strengthen the church body or dismember it. The question is not that conflict exists, or how much, but how it is handled.

Read Ephesians 4: 1-6

3. What is Paul calling for in these six verses?
4. What do you think preserving the "unity of the Spirit" looks like?

Read Ephesians 4: 7-16

5. What is the result of attaining a unity of the faith?

6. Verse 15 talks about speaking the “truth in love”. Why is this important?  
What is accomplished?

Read Ephesians 4: 17-32

7. What principles do you find in this passage for dealing with conflict in a godly way?
8. What do think it means to “give the devil a foothold” (verse27) when you face conflict with someone?
9. How do unwholesome words damage our relationships?

## **Application**

1. What are the benefits of conflict handled in a healthy way? Why would conflict cause relationships to grow?
2. The word “church” literally refers to a people who are “called out and called together”. It is in the church family that we learn and practice the life worthy of the calling. How can you help those God has placed in your church family to live this life? What areas outlined in Ephesians chapter 4 do you want help growing in?