

UNITY & HOPE

Romans 15:1-13

Introduction

The churches that are healthiest are those that are united—working together for the sake of the gospel.

The key to unity is to follow Christ's example.

I. Follow Christ's example of humility. Romans 15:1-6

The strong must bear with the weak.

Each of us should please his neighbor and not just please ourselves.

Jesus didn't live to please himself.

"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."

John 6:38

It was costly.

Christ, the strong, died for those who are weak.

Can't we be patient with those for whom Christ died?

Follow the example of the Scriptures.

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Romans 15:4

God isn't just transforming individual lives; he is building a new community in Christ.

Two of the challenges we need to overcome to be a healthy church in America are:

1. American Individualism—the attitude that I can do this myself or that faith is a private matter.
2. American Consumerism—the attitude that says what's in it for me and never joins in service or ministry.

You'll never find the church described as a restaurant in Scripture.

What are the metaphors used in Scripture?

1. The church is a family.
2. The church is a body.
3. The church is a building made up of living stones.
4. The church is a fellowship.

Paul prays for the unity of the church in verses 5 & 6.

1. Unity is important for our witness.
2. Unity is important for our worship.

II. Follow Christ's example of acceptance. Romans 15:7-13

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you."

Romans 15:7

How did Christ accept you and me?

Christ became a servant of the Jews.

Christ came to the Jews so that the Gentiles might be saved.

Paul prayed for the unity of the church.

Paul prayed that we, the church, would be filled with hope.

Conclusion

May we follow Christ's example of humility.

May we follow Christ's example of acceptance.