



Core Seminars—Living as a Church
Class 6: Church Fellowship:
Building a Bond of Unity

4. Fellowship in Forgiveness: Love Extends Mercy

- Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col 3:13)
- Don't assume motives – benefit of the doubt
- Look ahead to perfect fellowship in eternity

5. Fellowship in Suffering: Love Brings Comfort

God “comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Cor 1:4)

- Jesus' example of compassion (Mark 1:40-41)

6. Fellowship as One Body: Love Considers the Whole

- Pray through the directory
- Train others to disciple others
- Give generously for the good of the whole
- Commit to attend members' meetings

IV. Conclusion: Love Never Fails (1 Cor 13:8)

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I. Introduction

Acts 2:42: They “*devoted themselves... to the fellowship*”

What makes Christian fellowship different from worldly relationships?

II. What Characterizes Healthy Relationships in the Church?

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Why Is Love Important?

1. God is glorified when we love across societal boundaries (Eph 3:10)

2. Our love models the unity of love in the Triune God:

“The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” (John 17:22-23)

An Overview of Christian Love

Love = “That disposition or affection by which one is dear to another” – Jonathan Edwards

1. Christian love is hard

- Our sinful flesh resists unity
- We’re called to love other sinners

2. We can love because of God’s love for us

- God is both the source and model for our love

“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” (1 John 3:16)

- So, strive to appreciate God’s love for you

3. Love brings great joy

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

III. What Does Loving Fellowship Look Like?

1. Fellowship in Diversity: Love Seeks Understanding (James 2:1, Rom 12:16)

2. Fellowship in Service: Love Requires Sacrifice

“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:10-11)

- Carry each other’s burdens (Gal 6:2)

3. Fellowship in Truth: Loves Leads to Holiness

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.” (Col 3:16)

- **Transparency** (James 5:16)
- **Proclamation**
 - In “everyday conversation” and discipling relationships (Eph 4:15)
 - In gentle rebuke (Heb 3:13, Lev 19:17, James 5:19)
 - In sharing wisdom about general patterns and habits of life