

18.

Live in harmony with one another.

Romans 12:16a

“Live”, not just “meet together occasionally”. One of the hallmarks of social maturity is learning how to get along with people who are different. This is one of the chief goals of parents for their children (“socialising” them). One of the hallmarks of Christian maturity is being able to get along with other Christians who have differences with us over matters of opinion, worship styles, and intellectual appreciation. Learning how to do love within a church community means that we become considerate of others, even when we don’t agree with them. This might look like cooking them a meal when they are sick, or mowing their grass when they are on holidays, or washing their car while they are undergoing chemotherapy. It could also look like taking them for a coffee, or going out to lunch with them and talking. How well do you know those you are different to in your church?

1. Is there anything unusual about the prayer found in Romans 15:5-6? Would you like someone to pray this for you?
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2. What is necessary for a believer to do in order to get along with a fellow believer quite different to us?
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3. Are there just some people you can never get along with? Do you need to get along with everyone in your local church?
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Churches are described in the New Testament as being made up of different people (nationalities, languages, social standing, educational backgrounds, religious backgrounds, former sexual identities, and both genders). This is why some call the

local church: “heterogenous” (hetero=*different* + genous=*a kind*), that is, comprised of people from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, skin colours, and languages. If everybody in a local church were the same, it would then be described as *homogenous*.

4. What does God do with different people who come to Christ (Eph. 2:15)?

5. What is the difference between *unity* and *unison*? Which word better reflects the word: *harmony*?

6. What could we as a church do to promote harmony with diversity within our fellowship?

7. When offence happens within a church, how could Romans 12:16a be applied?

Amen.