

THE CHURCH IN HARMONY

Wednesday, October 29

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

1 Thessalonians 5:12 *Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you.*

In his final words to the Thessalonian church, Paul lays an outline for church health and unity. He presents a grocery list of commands that are to stir believers to love one another more and obey the commands they have received.

CONCERNING LEADERSHIP (5:12-13) – Ministry can be hard work. Paul instructs believers to see and know (acknowledge) their leaders. God has appointed them to care for and admonish His people. The word “admonish” means “to put sense into someone’s head.” It is the leader’s task to proclaim the Word of God in order to correct, challenge, and change the hearts of God’s people.

To hold leaders “in the highest regard” does not mean that pastors and leaders are to be put on a pedestal. But it does mean that believers should show proper respect and appreciation for those who serve as leaders. Believers are to “be at peace” with their leaders and each other. This is a command for the church to be united in the purpose of Christ. The church cannot grow nor give a good testimony to the world when they are at war with one another. It requires the whole body working together to bring about the unity and peace that shows the world what it means to love God.

CONCERNING FELLOWSHIP (5:14-15) – The church is made up of many people who all have different strengths and weaknesses. For a church to be in harmony some believers need to be warned and others encouraged.

1. Wayward Christians – “Idle and disruptive” literally means unruly. Those who stir up problems whether through wrong activity, wrong attitudes, or wrong doctrine must be warned of the consequences both to themselves and to the church where God has placed them.
2. Worried Christians – The word “disheartened” literally means “small-souled.” These are people who are easily discouraged or think they are worthless and have nothing to give to God. Paul’s response to these people was encouragement. They need strong brothers and sisters who will come alongside to support them, teach them the promises of God’s Word, and walk with them through their struggles.
3. Weak Christians – These are new Christians or Christians who have not grown in their faith. Paul’s prescription for weak Christians is for those who are strong in their faith to uphold them. They need the love and support of strong saints who can help them not fall into temptation but instead grow in their faith.
4. Wearisome Christians – There are always those in a congregation who no matter how much teaching, discipline, and encouraging they receive just do not grow in their walk with the Lord. Paul’s answer is patience. Believers are to show others the same patience that God has shown to them.
5. Wrathful Christians – Finally, Paul deals with those Christians who insist on taking revenge on others for the wrongs they feel have been done to them. The Bible is full of warnings to leave vengeance in God’s hands. Paul’s answer to this desire for vengeance is to always “strive to do what is good.” Hurting someone else because you have been hurt is a selfish act. Believers are to always think of others and their good first.