

LIFE LINKS

Growing Together



(Remember the point is not to get through all the questions, but to facilitate connection between each other and God's word.)

:Life:

Where is the strangest place that you have ever gotten lost? Before smart phone technology.

:Bible:

The unity of the early church is threatened. Paul and Barnabas get into a debate with a group of people that believe that in order to be a follower of Jesus you must first convert to Judaism. This becomes such a big issue that they need to take this discussion back to where it all began, Jerusalem. After they are welcomed by the elders and apostles, this issue is discussed and debated for an extended period of time. Peter is the first to speak and he says that salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus. James speaks next and quotes the prophets to advocate for the inclusion of the Gentiles. The Church comes up with a bare minimum requirements for the Gentile believers. They are to avoid things polluted by idols, avoid blood, and avoid things strangled. All these prohibitions have to do with diet. They also prohibit sexual immortality because the sexual behavior of the Gentile world are different and need to be regulated by scripture. The purpose of these regulations are to promote unity.

What hurdles stand in the way of unity today?

The hurdles in the day of this passage are Jewish vs. Gentile behavior. There may even be more hurdles to clear in our multi-cultural world today? How can we begin to overcome those hurdles?

Sometimes unity is threatened by hard feelings. Do you see this as a serious problem in Fairway?

(Deeper Question: Who do you need to forgive for unity to take root?)

Read Scripture:

Ephesians 5:3-10

[3] But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. [4] Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. [5] For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. [6] Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [7] Therefore do not become partners with them; [8] for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light [9] (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), [10] and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. (ESV)

Sometimes our behavior can promote disunity. What are steps that we can take to make sure that we are not causing others to sin?

Do you consider abstaining from certain behaviors as a burden or as a way to love others in your church?

:Application:

Have you experienced group disunity, how did that feel? How can we make sure that our church is moving toward unity?

:Prayer Requests:

