



# Week **6**

## **God's plan for the church**

### **Memory Verse:**

*... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

*Ephesians 4:1(b)-2 (NIV)*



# **PERSONAL STUDY**

## **Read Ephesians 4:1-16**

### **OPENING REMARKS:**

After three chapters of solid instruction in the foundational truths of God, Paul makes a dramatic change and shifts his focus from principles to practice, from beliefs to behaviours.

In this passage Paul is encouraging the Ephesians to mature and grow in Christ. He starts by telling them to live in a manner worthy of their calling. Paul could have given the Ephesian a list of things to do. Instead, Paul gives a list of things to be, namely patient, humble, gentle, supporting each other, unified in the Spirit.

Paul stresses the importance of maintaining unity in the church. He emphasizes that there is only one body, one head, and one faith. There is only one God.

**STUDY QUESTIONS:**

Read Ephesians 4:1. Paul begins this passage with an urgent plea to live a life worthy of the calling. What does he mean by this? What is our calling? (Refer to the previous studies.)

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Read Ephesians 4:2-3. What are the characteristics (virtues) of a life which is worthy of our calling and what do they mean? (Also refer to Philippians 2:1-4 and Colossians 3:12-14).

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Why are these virtues so important for maintaining unity? Which of these virtues do you still need to work on?

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Read Ephesians 4:4-6. We are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit. But Paul also says we already have one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father of all. How do these seven “ones” contribute to actually living our true unity?

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Read Ephesians 4:7-10. What has God given each church member? (Refer to Psalm 68:18 which is quoted in verse 8.)

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Read Ephesians 4:11-13. What has God give each and every church? List the gifts spoken of in these verses.

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God gave us the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers - people. These gifts progressively

benefit the church. What are the 4 stated purposes for these gifts that build upon one another described in Ephesians 4: 11, 12 and 13?

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Read Ephesians 4:14-16. How does spiritual infancy differ from spiritual maturity? (Also refer to 1 Corinthians 13:11 and 14:20)

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What winds and waves are blowing and tossing the church today?

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How does the image of the church that Paul gives in verse 16 underline all that he has been saying in this passage?

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## **Closing remarks:**

Unity in the church must be preserved. However, Unity does not imply uniformity. It does not mean that all Christians will think alike or perform identical ministries. It does imply a common purpose and interdependence within the body of Christ.

The church was never intended to be only a building – a place where lonely people walk in, listen and walk out, still alone. It was meant to be a place of fellowship. It is a place where fellow members are built up to maturity.

In true fellowship, Christians do not judge one another, they do not bite and devour each other, they do not provoke each other, lie to each other speak evil or grumble about each other.

True fellowship builds up. Therefore, Christians will receive each other, they will be kind and tender-hearted, they will forgive each other, submit to each other and comfort one another. That is true fellowship, life touching life to bring blessing and spiritual growth. The greatest need of the Church has always been spiritual maturity.

# GROUP DISCUSSION

## Prayer

### Memory verse:

*... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

*Ephesians 4:1(b)-2 (NIV)*

### Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week.

### Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 4:1-16



## Discussion questions

Read Ephesians 4:1. Paul begins this passage with an urgent plea to live a life worthy of the calling. What does he mean by this? What is our calling? Discuss in the group.

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Read Ephesians 4:2-3. What are the characteristics (virtues) of a life which is worthy of our calling? (Also refer to Philippians 2:1-4 and Colossians 3:12-14). Why are these virtues so important for maintaining unity? Which of these virtues do you still need to work on? Discuss.

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Read Ephesians 4:4-6. We are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit. But Paul also says we already have one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one

baptism and one God and Father of all. How do these seven “ones” contribute to actually living our true unity?

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Read Ephesians 4:7-13. List the gifts spoken of in these verses. What is the nature of these gifts from God? What are we to do with them and what will be the result? Do you see these gifts at work in your life and your Church? Discuss.

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Read Ephesians 4:14-16. How does spiritual infancy differ from spiritual maturity? (Also refer to 1 Corinthians 13:11 and 14:20). What winds and waves are blowing and tossing the church today? Discuss in the group.

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How does the image of the church that Paul gives in verse 16 underline all that he has been saying in this passage? How does your church compare to this image? Discuss in the group.

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**Close in prayer**