

Rediscover Church • Week 7 • How Do We Love Members Who Are Different?

1) Tell about a time when you tried a very different kind of food (perhaps food from another culture or country), and despite your initial misgivings you learned to love it ...

We need to rediscover the church as the fellowship of differentes ... Jesus brought together the people who didn't normally associate – slaves and free people, poor and wealthy, Jews and Gentiles. This unified diversity ... This kind of community, this fellowship of differentes united by Christ alone, is what we need to rediscover in the church. - Rediscover Church, pg. 103, 108

2) What are the benefits of being unified in a church family with people who are different from you, in significant ways? How does that kind of “unified diversity” or “fellowship of differentes” make a church stronger?

3) Read *Ephesians 4:1-6*. What is something you have learned that has helped you grow in the “unity increasing” values and actions listed there? For example, how do you act with patience and gentleness when dealing with a difficult relationship or interaction with a fellow believer? What helps you to bear with others and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

4) Why is it important to have relationships in church that go beyond the “casual and comfortable” level? Is it true that having to “push through” interpersonal difficulties and forgive one another in practice can actually create deeper and more meaningful bonds? If so, why?

5) Read *Revelation 7:9-10*. What is diverse about the heavenly worshippers? What do they have in common?

Prayer Prompts

Jesus said, 'A new commandment I give 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

- Pray that God's love will be manifest in our church, and in our connection groups and groups of every kind. Pray for the unity of our church, that we will be a diverse community unified in Christ, a “fellowship of differentes.”
- Is there someone that you need to talk to, and take a step toward forgiveness or reconciliation? Pray about it ... and ask God to heal your heart and lead you into actions that can bring about unity, peace, and Christ-like love.