Marks of Strong Fellowship Within the Church

Romans15:1-13

Introduction: The Marks of a Strong Church. Once studying this passage, a believer can never claim he did not know his duty within the church. Every believer's part in building and making the church strong is clearly spelled out.

We have responsibility in the work of God

1.  The strong bear the weaknesses of the weak 1-3

2.  Everyone studies the Scriptures 4

3.  Everyone works for harmony 5-6

4.  Everyone accepts one another with a proper discrimination 7-12

5.  Everyone is filled by the God of hope 13

I. 15:1-3 Weak: in a strong church, the strong bear the weaknesses of the weak. The *weak* believers are described in Romans 14

A. They are those who judge, grumble, complain, murmur, and criticize Romans 14:2-3, 10, 13

B. They are those who still act in a do I have to behavior Rom 14:1,14-15

C. They are those who disobey God's Word and go against the explicit commands of God Ro 14:10-12, 16-23

The word "bear" (bastazein) does not mean to bear in the sense of putting up with It means to *bear the weak along*, to support them, to carry them along as a father or mother would carry a child—in love and tenderness, understanding and care.

1.  How can Loving kindness prevail in the church? Scripture clearly gives the answer: "Let *every one of us* please his neighbor." It is that simple: let us not please ourselves, but let us please our neighbor—let us live for his good and edification. No matter what we may desire...

places we may want to go,

food we may want to eat,

things we may want to see,

things we may want to buy,

if it is going to be a stumbling block to our brother—we do not do it. We please, help, support, and live for the good of our brothers and sisters so that they might be edified and built up in the faith.

2.  The believer has the greatest pattern in all the world for denying self and living for his neighbor: Jesus Christ Himself. "For *even* Christ pleased not himself."

The reproaches that were cast against God—the cursing, dishonor, unbelief, denial, hostility, all the shame and rebellion against God—cut the heart of Christ. Therefore, Christ set out to bear the reproaches against God: He came to earth and bore the sin of the reproaches and made it possible for all persons to praise God instead of reproaching His glorious name. The zeal to remove all the dishonor cast against God consumed Christ and fell upon Him

Psalm 69:19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

Christ did not live to please Himself. He did not pray "Father, remove this cup of sacrifice and denial from me—no matter what." He prayed: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus Christ is the believer's pattern for pleasing others instead of self.

 Phil. 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed

A glorious spirit would prevail in the church if this is practiced by "*everyone of us*."

[Acts 20:35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+20%3A35) I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ

Hebrews 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world

A *life-changing* point. The serious believer no longer asks if questionable behavior is right and moral, but Will this thing edify and build up his brother? Will this show the love of God to the brother and to the world.

Mark 12:30-31 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another

Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another

2 Cor. 13:9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection

Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself

Ephes. 4:29 Let not corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers

James 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well

2. Everyone studies the Scripture in a strong church. This is a great verse on the purpose of the Holy Scriptures.

In very simple terms it tells us why God gave us the Bible.

1.  The Scriptures were written for our learning (*didaskalian)* instruction, direction, and guidance.

[John 20:31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+20%3A31) But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so

[Romans 15:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ro+15%3A4) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope

1 Cor. 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth

[2 Tim. 3:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Ti+3%3A16) All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God

2.  The Scriptures were written to produce three things within the believer.

a.  Patience

b.  Comfort (*parakleseos*): encouragement, consolation, solace, help, exhortation, supplication. Whatever is needed the Scripture gives comfort to the believer.

John 8:51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death

John 14:15-16 If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world

c.  Hope

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope

Romans 1:16For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

1 Peter 1:20-23 [Christ] who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever

Unity in a strong church, everyone works for harmony. When there are so many differences and different ideas among people, believers must be constantly striving to be of one mind.

1.  How can a church with so many diverse personalities—achieve harmonious feelings and one mind? these two verses are a prayer of Paul. He has just said that the endurance and comfort necessary to live for God comes from the Scriptures. Now he says they come from God. In fact, he says that God is the God of patience (endurance) and consolation (comfort). Therefore, the believer secures his strength or endurance and comfort from both the Scriptures and God. If he desires to endure to the end—he must study the Scriptures and pray, asking God to give him strength and endurance, comfort and consolation

If we know the endurance and comfort of God, then we are bearing the weaknesses of each other; we are constantly supporting and helping and caring for each other. We are living in harmony and being of one mind.

2.  The pattern of endurance and consolation and of harmonious feelings with God and man was Christ Jesus.

He was faithful to God, sticking ever so close to God and fulfilling His ministry to the ultimate degree.

He experienced the comfort and the consolation of God, possessing an unbroken relationship with God.

He never held any ill feelings toward God or God's people. He was of one mind with God and was always working to bring every person into harmony with God.

The greatest pattern is Christ Himself. Christ was always working to bring men together with God so that they could have the endurance and comfort to live through all the trials and sufferings of life.

3.  The purpose for harmony between believers within the church is that we might *glorify God* with one mind and one mouth. God longs for our worship and praise. It is the very reason He created us and saved us. A divided church cannot worship God. This is exactly what is being said. A church has to be of one mind and mouth to worship God. If a people are not of one mind and mouth, God is not glorified; He is not worshipped.

Every one of us must work for the harmony of the church so that we may be of one mind and fulfill the very purpose for our existence: to glorify God.

 1 Cor. 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment

2 Cor. 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you

Ephes. 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

Phil. 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous

WE CAN NOT SEEK TO PLEASE OUR OWN SELVES , THE CHURCHES TO DAY ARE FULL OF SELF SEEKER’S GOING TO CHURCH DECEVING THEMSELVES , THEY ARE NOT SEEKING GOD THEY ARE JUST TRYING TO EASE THEIR CONSCIENCE

IF WE ARE SEEKING GOD WE WILL DO IT ALWAYS AND NOT JUST WHEN WE ARE AT CHURCH

WE GO ALL WEEK DOING THINGS FOR OURSELF AND OUR FAMILY AND THEN EXPECT GOD TO MEET US AT CHURCH

Unity: in a strong church everyone accepts one another justly. There is righteous judgment and proper discrimination in a strong church. Believers are to receive one another in the closest of bonds.

1.  The believer has the greatest pattern imaginable: Christ Himself. Christ received us, that God may be glorified. Therefore, we must receive each other so that God may be glorified through our lives and church. Just look at how far Christ went.

a.  Christ received the Jews and ministered to them. He did it for the truth of God: to confirm and fulfill the promises made to the Jewish nation. Think how discriminating, prejudicial, and judgmental the Jews were; yet Christ came to them and received and ministered to them. Why? For the truth of God—to fulfill the Word and praise of God.

b.  Christ received the Gentiles and ministered to them. He came to bring them the mercy of God, that they might praise God for His mercy. Remember He received and ministered to the Gentiles when they were living the most licentious and indulgent life-style imaginable Romans 1:18-32

2.  The Scripture proves the point. Scripture foretold...

Gentiles would have the gospel preached to them Romans 15:9; Psalm 18:49

Gentiles would rejoice with God's people Romans 15:10; Deut. 32:43

Gentiles would praise God and trust Christ as their Savior and Lord (Romans 15:11; Isaiah 11:1, [10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Isa+11%3A10)).

Believers are to receive one another even as Christ has received us. No one is too far gone to be rejected and cast away.

We are to receive each other, as Christ also received us.

 Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria [a despised people] had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the 15:19 Gentiles granted repentance unto life Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus

Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

We are to receive each other for *the* *glory of God.*

God is the "God of hope"

Author of our hope. Foundation of our hope. Builder of our hope. Finisher of our hope.

This is a prayer. The things mentioned can be possessed only as He gives them to us.

There is joy There is peace There is hope