

PEACE IN THE CONGREGATION

Rom. 14:19; I Cor. 14:33

INTRODUCTION:

1. So often the work of a local church is greatly hindered by internal dissensions.
2. Some congregations have a history of prolonged fussing and fuming over one thing or another.
3. These congregations have very little influence for good in the communities where they are located; in their personal conflicts they have lost sight of their mission.

I. THE EVILS OF ANTAGONISM AND DIVISION WITHIN A CONGREGATION

1. The unpleasantness of antagonism and division in a church -- Psalms 133: 1 - 3
 - (1) This factious spirit is manifest in the assembly, in the home, in social and business affairs.
 - (2) James said, "*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*" --James 3:16
2. PROGRESS is hindered
 - (1) A church in confusion and strife cannot hope to do very much in converting people.
 - (2) Such conditions stops the ears of the people against any plea the church makes.
 - (3) So the church, by its strife, contributes to the damnation of those it should save.
3. Division leads to SINS of all sorts.
 - (1) It causes members of the church to bite and devour one another -- Gal. 5: 15
 - (2) Every evil work -- James 3:16
4. Antagonism and division have a bad effect on the members.
 - (1) People who are not a party to division and antagonism are discouraged, and frequently become inactive -- at times even drift away from the church.
 - (2) People who are responsible destroy him for whom Christ died.
5. Division and confusion drives Christ out!
 - (1) If, by the factious spirit, one member is driven out of the congregation, Christ is thereby driven out -- Matt. 25:40; Acts 9:4

II. THINGS WHICH DESTROY PEACE IN A CONGREGATION

1. Being SOON ANGRY
 - (1) An elder must not be soon angry -- Tit. 1:7
 - (2) James says be "slow to wrath" -- James 1: 19
 - (3) Paul said put off anger -- Col. 3: 8
 - (4) Solomon -- Prov. 15:1

2. SELFISH AMBITION

- (1) At times some have a dogmatic spirit, and seek to have their own way in all things without regard to the rights of others.
- (2) Diotrephes was such a man -- III John 9 - 10
- (3) A self-willed spirit causes one to have selfish ambitions -- Tit. 1: 7
- (4) A selfish person will not help if he or she does not get their way.

3. SELF-JUSTIFICATION -- Luke 10:29

- (1) It is difficult for many to admit wrong.
- (2) A position is taken, wrong words are uttered, or improper acts performed, and rather than confess the error and change the life, one begins to justify himself.

4. The RULE OF OPINION

- (1) The desire to introduce work and worship that is unauthorized.
- (2) We walk by faith -- II Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17
- (3) Many churches have been divided over the rule of opinion in the last 20 years.

5. INACTIVITY can be the source of antagonism

- (1) In every congregation there is a certain amount of vitality which must, and will, find expression in some way.
- (2) Inactivity promotes discontentment, and this spirit or discontent grows into a spirit of unrest and dissatisfaction with each other.
- (3) Every Christian needs to be at work -- Eph. 4:16; Phil. 2:12; Rom. 12: 4 - 8

III. THINGS WHICH PROMOTE PEACE

1. GENUINE LOVE for the church

- (1) Christ gave Himself for it -- Eph. 5: 25
- (2) Christ's love was completely unselfish -- Rom. 15:3
- (3) The welfare of the church is much more important than any one of us, and its work ought not be retarded to satisfy the whims and fancies of immature members.

2. A sincere INTEREST in the SOULS OF OTHERS

- (1) We ought to help the weak -- Rom. 15: 1 - 2
- (2) Put the interest of others first -- Phil. 2: 2 -5; Rom. 15: 2 - 3

3. There must be NO RETALIATION

- (1) Rom. 12: 19 - 21
- (2) If someone slights and mistreats you, forget about getting even.

4. Try to UNDERSTAND the OTHER PERSON

- (1) The prophet Ezekiel said he went to those of the captivity and "*SAT WHERE THEY SAT*" --Ezekiel. 3:15
- (2) All of us are different;

1. Our personalities

2. Backgrounds
3. Likes and dislikes
4. Daily circumstances
5. Health
6. Family problems
7. Some are weak in the faith -- they need help -- Rom. 14:1; 15:1

(3) The "golden rule" must be applied by Christians in their treatment of each other -- Matt. 7: 12

5. SELF-DENIAL-- Luke 9:23

(1) Rom. 12: 10, 16

CONCLUSION:

1. Peace can be in any congregation when it is DESIRED.
2. It seems that some members delight in a turmoil.
3. Let us all work for PEACE here.
4. Are you here and not at peace with God??

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