**Keys To Unity**

*Ephesians 4:1-6*

*In order to attain unity there must be peace. It is the bond that allows unity. This peace, and unity, is found in the truth…*

* *“the calling with which you were called”* – Ephesians 2:10 (A new creation in Christ.)
	+ The calling was to abide in truth – John 8:31-32
		- *“unity of the Spirit”* – *“born of water and the Spirit”* (John 3:5)
	+ This suggest we no longer direct ourselves – Galatians 2:20
* Our fellowship with God brings us into fellowship with those who have done the same – Acts 2:40-45
	+ Obeyed the truth and added to the church – v. 41
	+ Continued in the truth with each other (joint participation – this was desired) – v. 42
	+ Continued in love for each other – v. 45
		- Sincere concern for brethren – 4:32,34,35
	+ Continued in *“one accord”* – v. 46
		- As Jesus intended – John 17:20-23
		- Considering God’s divine nature allows us to better understand unity, and its necessity in the church – Genesis 1:1 – *“In the beginning God”* – *eloheem* – plural suggesting the united godhead – Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
* We must KEEP this unity.
	+ Keep – *tēreō* – to guard.

In order to *“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* we must possess the characteristics of Christ. This includes…

1. Lowliness
* Philippians 2:1-8 – At the core of our salvation is humility. If Christ did not humble Himself we would have no hope. He expects us to act the same.
* 2 Corinthians 11:28 – Paul’s humble lifestyle was learned from Christ, and motivated by the value of souls.
	+ Context – After listing his suffering for Christ. This he also did, by extension, for his brethren.
1. Gentleness
* James 1:21 – Meekness is necessary for our relationship with God.
	+ It is accepting God’s dealings with us as good, and therefore submitting to Him in obedience. (It is a mild disposition. If God said it, we have no contention with it.)
* Galatians 6:1 – Gentleness does not seek revenge or harm when a wrong is committed. It looks to the well-being of others.
1. Longsuffering
* 2 Peter 3:15 – Our Lord is not quick to destroy because He cares for us and wants us to be with Him.
* 1 Thessalonians 5:14 – We are all imperfect. There will be shortcomings, wrongdoings, and growing pains, but we must continue with patience.
1. Forbearance
* Romans 15:1 – In context of weak and strong brethren. There will be situations where we must “put up with” certain things for the sake of maintaining unity with our brethren.
1. Love
* 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a – All of these things are summed up in love. This love is a choice made out of a sincere care for others.
* Romans 12:9 – Our love must be sincere!

**Conclusion**

1. Unity is God’s design for the church.
2. Therefore we must endeavor to keep unity!
3. Maintaining unity requires individuals to examine themselves to find whether they are practicing things. Are you?