

## Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tender hearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling/or reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. (I Peter 3: 8-9)*

What constitutes a successful church? In our society today, some may consider a church with thousands of members a success. Others may consider a church successful if the pastor or leader is a world-renowned speaker. However, God's view of a successful church is one where its members are unified and the gospel is going forth. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus lays the blueprint for a successful church. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This is our primary mission as Christians. We must be diligent to keep our true purpose at the forefront of our minds. In his book, *The Seven Basics of Belonging*, 2021, Sam Rainer states, "As a church member, you must keep the main thing the main thing. The goal of every church member is to share the love of Christ with a lost world" (p.67).

In order to successfully carry out our mission, we must be unified. Attending worship services together and working on church projects together increases fellowship, but these things alone won't make us unified the way God intends. In order to be truly unified, we must seek out unity as an act of love (Rainer, 67). Ephesians 4:1-6 shows us the way:

*"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, 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. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord,*

*one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

As part of our church membership, Sam Rainer deemed unity as a sixth basic of belonging (pg. 67). This does not mean that we lose our individuality or the ability to think for ourselves. We know that a church will not make much progress in disunity. The unifying force of every church is God’s Word and God’s mission (pg.69). We must remain unified around the Word of God, the Great Commission, the vision, and the mission of the church. The goal of every church is to share the love of Christ with a lost world (Rainer, 67).

A unified church must have love undergirding every fabric of its being. Seeking unity itself is an act of love. Sometimes, we have to work with difficult people. Our job is not to fix them, but to pray for them. God’s Word to us is to bear with one another, forgive, and show kindness and patience (Colossians 3:12-14). Love is a demonstration. It is known from the actions it prompts. It is demonstrated and seen by what a person says or does and how they do it. Words can reflect love in a powerful way or they can kill the spirit of another person. Paul admonishes us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Therefore, love should be the basis of all our behaviors. Keep the main thing the main thing; seek unity and show forth love. In all of your church activities, projects, meetings, and interactions with others, again keep the main thing the main thing.

**Prayer:**

God, we thank you for your Word to us and the great love demonstrated toward us. Help us to show a deeper love and stronger unity within our church and with one another. We thank you Lord Jesus for showing us the way to love. Amen