

Working Together To Build Up The Church

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / September 11, 2022

Ephesians 4:1-16

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

‘When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.’

⁹ (In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: ***Thanks Be To God!***

I. You need to know how passionate Jesus is about building up His church!

A. The New Testament writers spoke with passion about the building of the church.

1 Corinthians 14:3-5 “On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people **for their upbuilding** and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies **builds up the church**. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, **so that the church may be built up.**”

1 Corinthians 14:17 “For you may be giving thanks well enough, **but the other person is not being built up.**”

1 Corinthians 14:26 “...Let all things be done **for building up.**”

II. You need to know Jesus' plan is to build His church through people like you & me!

Ephesians 4:11-12 "And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ...**"

III. God's Word promises the church "self-builds" only when all of us are active in ministry together.

- A. You need to see your ministry as it truly is—connected to **Someone other than you!**

Ephesians 4:15 "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ..."

- B. You need to see your ministry as it truly is - connected to **something bigger than you!**

Ephesians 4:16 "from whom **the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped...**"

- C. You need to see your ministry as it truly is—connected to **a purpose God has for you!**

Ephesians 4:16 "...when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**"

1 Peter 4:10-11 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

IV. You need to decide if Jesus will build His church through you or around you.

1 Corinthians 14:12 "So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, **strive to excel in building up the church.**"

"If I were to 'strive to excel' in _____, it would build up the church."

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. How are you a contributor to what the Lord is doing in the life & ministry of our church?
2. Do you find it hard to believe that God plans to use you in the ongoing process of building His church? Why or why not?
3. Pastor Peter said it's important to see our ministry as "connected to Someone other than you," "connected to something bigger than you," and "connected to a purpose God has for you." Which of those is most important for you to remember? Why?
4. Reread 1 Cor. 14:12. How should you fill in the blank in the following sentence?

"If I were to 'strive to excel' in _____, it would build up the church."