GCI Buzz

Healthy Church: What Is Christian Unity?

Unity

Noun

Definition: Our shared life in Christ that joins believers together through the Holy Spirit and calls us to live in love with one another.

What Is Christian Unity?

Christian unity begins with Jesus.

Everyone who belongs to Christ is joined to him and, through him, joined to one another. Scripture describes the church as the Body of Christ, with many members sharing one life in Jesus **(Romans 12:4–5)**.

This means our unity is already a gift from God. The Holy Spirit draws us into communion with the Father and the Son and is the source of unity within the church.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to live in ways that make this God-given unity visible.

Our Unity is in Christ

Jesus is at the center of Christian unity.

Our backgrounds, personalities, cultures, experiences, and gifts may be very different. Yet every Christian shares something greater than these differences. We belong to Jesus.

Jesus prayed that his followers would be one **(John 17:20–23)**. This unity reflects the communion we have with the Triune God. The Father has drawn us into relationship with himself through the Son, and the Spirit enables us to share in that life together.

Our unity begins there.

Because we share in Christ, we also share life with one another.

One Body, Many Members

Scripture gives us the image of the church as a body **(1 Corinthians 12:12–27)**.

A healthy body needs different parts. In the same way, the church needs people with different gifts, perspectives, experiences, and ways of serving.

Unity gives us room to value those differences.

We can learn from one another. We can recognize gifts that are different from our own. We can work together toward the shared mission Jesus has given his church.

Each person belongs to the Body, and each person has something to contribute.

Our differences can become gifts we offer one another as we grow together in Christ.

Unity Shapes How We Treat One Another

05

Our unity in Christ becomes visible through our relationships.

Paul reminded the Corinthian church that because they shared in Christ, they were one body **(1 Corinthians 10:16–17)**. That reality was meant to influence how they treated one another.

The same is true for us.

Christian unity invites us to practice patience when we disagree. It teaches us to listen carefully and extend grace. It encourages us to seek reconciliation when relationships are strained.

Love becomes the way our shared identity in Christ is expressed **(Colossians 3:12–14)**.

As we grow in our awareness that we belong to one another in Christ, our relationships can become a witness to the reconciling love of Jesus.

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Unity Extends Beyond Our Congregation

06

The Body of Christ is much larger than our local congregation or denomination.

Christians around the world worship in different languages, cultures, traditions, and denominations. Those differences do not change the One to whom we belong.

GCI affirms the spiritual unity of all believers in Jesus Christ. Because we share Christ, we can recognize other Christians as members of the same Body and participate together in his mission.

This gives us opportunities to build relationships with other churches, pray together, serve our communities together, and celebrate what God is doing beyond our own congregation.

Christian unity helps us see the church through a larger lens. We belong to something much bigger than ourselves.

Unity and Our Shared Mission

Unity has a purpose.

Jesus prayed for the unity of his followers in connection with the world's recognition of who he is **(John 17:20–23)**. How Christians live together can bear witness to the gospel.

When people with different experiences and perspectives learn to love one another, the reconciling work of Jesus becomes visible.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts throughout the Body for the work of the gospel. As each person contributes, the church grows together in Christ **(Ephesians 4:11–16)**.

Our shared mission gives us a reason to keep moving toward one another. Together, we participate in what Jesus is doing in our congregations, neighborhoods, and world.

Next Steps for Members

- **Notice:** Pay attention to the different people God has placed within your congregation. What gifts, experiences, or perspectives do they bring that you can learn from?
- **Connect:** Build a relationship with someone you do not normally spend time with. Listen to their story. Look for what you have in common and what you share in Christ.
- **Repair:** Is there a relationship where disagreement or hurt has created distance? Ask the Spirit to show you a faithful next step toward reconciliation.
- **Look Beyond:** Learn about another Christian congregation or ministry in your community. Consider how you might pray for or encourage their participation in Christ's mission.

Conclusion

Christian unity is a gift we receive in Christ and a reality we are invited to live.

The Father draws us together through the Son, and the Holy Spirit creates communion among us. We belong to Christ, and because we belong to him, we belong to one another.

Our differences remain part of who we are. Within the Body of Christ, those differences can enrich our shared life and strengthen our participation in Jesus' mission.

As we listen, serve, forgive, and grow together, we make our unity in Christ visible. We offer the world a glimpse of the communion and love into which God is drawing all humanity.

Footnotes

"The Communion of Saints" – GCI Article

"One in Christ" – GCI Article