

Let us Return to the Lord : Maturing Life through Service

1. Praise “Lord I Offer My Life to You”

2. Prayer (by the leader or a member)

3. Scripture Reading Ephesians 4:7-16

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows, and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

4. Sharing

What spiritual gift would you like to receive? Why do you need that spiritual gift? (If you have already received it, please share what gift you’ve received and why you wanted to receive it)

5. Serving with the spiritual gift we have received...

God has given each person a gift. There are so many different gifts in the church. Then how can the church achieve unity and growth with these various gifts?

Paul emphasized that Christian unity can be enriched by the diversity of the gifts. The church is spiritually enriched and grows when the members of the church, who have Christ as their head, perform voluntary and humble service in love with the gifts they have received. Also, in order for individual gifts to be used as tools to serve the community and the world, it is necessary to make a decision to transform the values of building my kingdom into building the kingdom of God.” We must return to the Lord with this commitment. “Our works don’t replace the verbal preaching of the Gospel, but in them we demonstrate, tangibly, the love and grace that we proclaim without our mouths.” (J.D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, p.43-45, 122)

6. Background

While most of Paul’s Epistles were written to solve specific problems in the church, the book of Ephesians was a circular letter (intended to be sent to number of churches), emphasizing ‘unity in Christ’, a theme commonly needed for all church in Asia Minor.

The book of Ephesians can be divided into two parts: doctrinal aspects (chapter 1-3) and practical aspects (chapter 4-6). Chapter 4 is the first part of practical aspects of the doctrinal principles. Paul applies the principle of vertical union with God and the principle of horizontal union between believers to the church and recommends the unity of the church based on that principle. (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Just before this text, Paul said that the reason why believers must become one is that there is only one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all things. Therefore, he emphasizes that the saints were called to become one in one hope, one faith, and one baptism. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

How can the church, gathering of people who are still imperfect, be firmly established through the saints with various gifts and keep the unity? As a member of the church, how should I serve the church? Let's think and share through today's passage.

7. Into the Scripture

- 1) To whom did Christ give the gift of grace (spiritual gift)? (Verse 7)
- 2) What is the purpose of appointing various officers (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) in the church?
- 3) What does a "perfect person" look like for the members who serve the church? (Verse 13)
- 4) What do you think is the difference between a mature believer (those who have reached the fullness of Christ) and an infant-like believer? (Verse 14)
- 5) What is the meaning of true service that you realized through today's passage? Let's share our thoughts. (Verse 15-16)

8. Into Life

- 1) Let's share what we can do in our lives (home, work, church, etc.) to become one in believing and knowing Jesus.
- 2) Let's talk about where I can serve with the spiritual gifts I have received from God. Let's encourage and pray for each other so that individuals may grow spiritually, and the church will stand firmly through that service.

Pray together

- 1. Let's pray for us to become a mature Christian to obey and serve with the spiritual gifts we have received.**
- 2. Let's pray for the church officers to achieve the unity and build the church firmly.**