

The Commitment of Belonging

### **Romans 15:5–7**

**'May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.'**

### **Romans 15:5-7**

#### **The Context of Romans 15**

In Romans 14–15, Paul is addressing tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers. They had different convictions about food, holy days, traditions, and culture. The issue was not merely preference; it was identity.

Paul's concern is not that everyone becomes identical. Rather, he wants believers who are different to remain united in Christ.

This gives important insight into verse 5:

"May God, who gives perseverance and encouragement, grant you to live in harmony with one another..."

Paul recognizes that unity is not something humans naturally produce. It is a gift that God must create within His people.

### **Romans 15:5–7**

#### **Big Idea**

**Because Christ welcomed us into God's family by grace, we are called to commit ourselves to one another in covenant community, protecting unity, sharing responsibility, serving faithfully, and strengthening the testimony of the church.**

- Verse 5 — Harmony
- Verse 6 — Glory
- Verse 7 — Welcome

Then the membership/belonging applications flow naturally from the text rather than becoming the main structure.

## **More Than Membership**

### **Romans 15:5–7**

#### **Big Idea**

**Because God has united us in Christ, we are called to live in harmony with one another, glorify God together, and welcome others as Christ has welcomed us.**

## **Introduction: Belonging in a Culture of**

# Convenience

We live in a culture that values convenience but often struggles with commitment. People move between jobs, communities, organizations, and even churches with increasing ease. Yet God never intended His people merely to attend gatherings. He intended them to belong to a family.

When God saves us, He does more than forgive our sins. He adopts us into His family and places us into a people. The church is not simply an event we attend. It is a family to which we belong.

In Romans 15, Paul is addressing tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers who differed in culture, traditions, and convictions. His goal was not uniformity but unity. God was bringing very different people together in Christ.

And in verses 5–7, Paul shows us what true belonging looks like.

## 1. God Creates the Harmony We Must Protect

### (Romans 15:5)

**"May God, who gives perseverance and encouragement, grant you to live in harmony with one another."**

Paul begins with a prayer because he understands something important: unity is ultimately God's work. Harmony is not something that naturally occurs whenever people gather together. It is something God creates through His Spirit.

The church is filled with different personalities, backgrounds, preferences, cultures, ages, and experiences. Yet God brings these differences together under one Lord, one gospel, and one Spirit.

Notice Paul does not pray that they all become identical. He prays that they live in harmony.

A choir does not require every voice to sing the same note. Harmony is different voices working together to create one beautiful sound.

That is God's desire for His church.

**Therefore, we protect the unity God creates.**

**We choose love over criticism**

**'Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love makes up for all offenses. '**  
**Proverbs 10:12**

Every church is filled with imperfect people because every church is filled with people like us. Love covers faults, extends grace, and seeks restoration.

**We refuse gossip**

**'The words of a gossip merely reveal the wounds of his own soul, and his slander penetrates into the innermost being.'**

**Proverbs 18:8**

Gossip destroys trust and fractures relationships. Belonging means protecting people even when they are not present.

### **We pursue reconciliation**

#### **Colossians 3:13,14**

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Mature believers move toward difficult conversations rather than away from them. Harmony requires humility and forgiveness.

A good question for every member to ask is:

**Am I contributing to the harmony of this church or am I creating disunity?**

## **2. God's Glory Is the Purpose We Must Pursue**

### **(Romans 15:6)**

**"So that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Paul reveals why unity matters.

Unity is not the goal.

#### **God's glory is the goal.**

The church exists for something bigger than itself. God brings people together so that together they reflect His greatness to the world.

When diverse people worship together, serve together, forgive one another, and remain united despite differences, the world sees something supernatural.

The church becomes a display of God's reconciling power.

#### **This means every member shares responsibility.**

We all contribute to the church's witness.

### **We pray**

Every significant movement of God is sustained through prayer. We pray for people to be saved, disciplined, healed, strengthened, and sent.

### **We participate**

The mission of the church is not the responsibility of a few leaders. Every believer is called to contribute to

the life and mission of God's people.

### **We serve**

God has gifted every believer differently, but He has gifted every believer intentionally. The question is not whether you have a ministry. The question is where God is calling you to use your gifts.

### **We give**

**'Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. '**

### **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**

Giving is worship. It reflects trust in God and partnership in His mission.

Every act of faithful service contributes to the glory of God through the local church.

A healthy church is not built by a few people doing everything.

It is built when everybody accepts responsibility for the family God has placed them in.

## **3. Christ's Welcome Becomes Our Welcome**

### **(Romans 15:7)**

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Everything Paul has said now comes down to one command.

**Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you.**

- •           This is the foundation of Christian belonging.
- •           How did Christ welcome us?
- •           He welcomed us when we were sinners.
- •           He welcomed us when we were far from God.
- •           He welcomed us when we had nothing to offer Him.
- •           His welcome was based entirely on grace.
- •           That means nobody in the church has earned their place.
- •           Every one of us stands on equal ground at the foot of the cross.
- •           The same grace that brought us to Christ should shape the way we treat one another.

**Therefore, we become a welcoming people.**

### **We welcome newcomers**

We remember what it felt like to be new.

### **We open our lives to others**

Belonging happens through relationships, not merely attendance.

### **We move beyond our friendship circles**

We intentionally include people who may otherwise remain unnoticed.

### **We help people belong**

From the parking lot to the foyer, from small groups to Sunday gatherings, every member becomes part of creating a culture of welcome.

Imagine if every person in the church saw themselves as responsible for helping others belong.

The church would not simply become larger.

It would become deeper.

## **Conclusion: More Than Membership**

Romans 15 teaches that God creates harmony among His people, gathers them for His glory, and calls them to welcome one another with the same grace they have received.

So church membership is more than a name on a database.

It is more than regular attendance.

It is more than completing a class.

It is saying:

- I will protect the harmony of God's family.
- I will pursue God's glory alongside His people.
- I will welcome others as Christ welcomed me.

That is belonging.

That is family.

That is what Romans 15 calls us to become.

### **Final Challenge**

If Oakhill is your church home, God may be inviting you into something deeper than attendance and involvement.

He may be calling you to genuine belonging.

Because belonging is not simply being present.

**Belonging is joyfully committing yourself to the people God has placed around you for His glory.**