

Family Life

Long Beach Alliance Church • January 2nd, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

~John 17:23 (NASB)

1) The Prayer Of The King

- A) On the night Jesus was betrayed, He prayed outloud for His disciples to hear (John 17:1ff). It was customary, especially at important times, for the “head of the household” to pray outloud for the “family” to hear.
- B) Jesus’ prayer for His followers (popularly called His “High Priestly Prayer”), emphasizes the importance of knowing the Word of God (17:6-8, 12, 14, 17). Jesus wants us to be “people of the Word” (17:17).
- C) Note how central prayer and Scripture are for all followers of Jesus Christ! We listen to God through His Word and we respond back to Him through prayer. Prayer and the Word of God are like breathing in and out for the body -- you cannot live for long without both!
- D) From these critical ingredients (prayer and the Word), Jesus passionately prays for His followers in all generations (17:20) to have unity together (17:21).

- E) Note that the purpose of unity in the church (the followers of Jesus Christ), is not self-serving, but meant to be very public for the benefit of others (17:20-23).

2) An Uphill Battle

- A) It didn’t take long for followers of Christ to completely forget the prayer of the King, and decide that independence and/or cliquish groups are far more comfortable than unity (1st Corinthians 11:17-22).
- B) Like a biological family, the church family is to be soaked in outloud prayer and God’s Word. When these ingredients are lost, unity is set aside and factions are given life.
- C) In a church, elder leadership provides sound biblical teaching from God’s Word and times of outloud prayer. These are the central and abiding aspects of church. Everything else flows from these divine ingredients!
- D) We exist, as a church, to grow together in loving God (through the Word and prayer), loving others (experience genuine unity through a small group), and service to the world (that the world may know, John 17:3).

3) Communion ~ A Rededication To Word, Prayer, & Unity

- A) We participate in communion on a regular basis in our church family because Jesus Christ called all His followers to “remember Him” as the basis for love, unity, and service (1st Corinthians 11:23-26).
- B) As always, when we remember Him, we are also called to examine ourselves and repent of anything which does not lead us into the Word, Prayer, and Unity (11:27-32).