



Growing Up Together Ephesians 4v1-16

God intends and longs for us to grow up together, to become mature in Christ (4v13, 15, 16). God's grace and kindness flows to us, growing and building us up, *in the church*—in a local fellowship.

1) Walk Worthy (4v1-6)

Paul urges us to walk in a way that fits with our identity in Christ (4v1). If we're trusting Jesus for ourselves, we're included in this amazing thing that is the church—God's dearly loved family (1v5, 2v19); the body of the Lord himself (1v22-23); the 'place' where God dwells by his Spirit (2v22). The church is the place where God is reversing the curse of Genesis 3! The body of Christ is where (3v10) the wisdom and glory of God is now on show. God wants to fill local fellowships to all the fullness of God (3v20).

How does this identity you have, as part of the church, alter how you want to walk & live? To walk like a son in this family is to walk like Jesus (4v2), and so to make every effort to guard (or "keep") the unity, oneness and togetherness which the Spirit has created (4v3). Just see how together we are, see how much we share (4v4). Perhaps list and think through some of these things which unite us. What are signs of the maturity God wants and what are not?

2) Equipped by Christ (4v7-13)

When Christ rose victorious (4v8), he ascended and gave gifts to his people, to his body. Jesus is amazing—he is now higher than all the heavens and fills everything (v10). The gift he gave to each one of us (v7) is something that builds us up together—that grace (or gift) *is* the apostles like Paul, the prophets (see also 3v5), the evangelists, and the shepherd-teachers (v11). **These people, by teaching the apostolic truth (see v14-15) of the gospel, equip Christ's body for "the work of ministry" (ESV) so that we are built up together, reaching unity and maturity, and attaining to the "stature of the fullness of Christ" (ESV).** Christ gifts each local fellowship with what it needs to grow up together and become mature. It's not about me it's about us. "I" am not equipped through the church and its meetings (although that's true in one sense), rather the family of God is equipped by Christ in the church—we're built up together in the body of Christ. *So, what will happen if someone puts distance between themselves and a local church? (Band/orchestra illustration).*

3) Growing Up Together (4v14-16)

Please read v15-16 to yourself slowly. This only works as "each part [of the body] does its work." *Why is this not hopelessly idealistic?*

God will keep his promise and word to us here, as we keep and follow his word. The Lord is saying to us this morning, this is the place of blessing and of grace (Psalm 33v3). Growing up together in the body of Christ is the way to experiencing spiritual flourishing and the fullness of Christ. Let's commit afresh today to that vision of what God wants to do here in his local church.