



# THE WAYS

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**KEEP THE UNITY, SAVOR DIVERSITY.** Thank God that, like parts of the human body, we're not all the same. Be open to learning from others, regardless of their age, background, experience, or tenure with our church. We make better decisions and grow as people when we consider multiple perspectives. Listen with curiosity to others and consider how to use their ideas.

1. What diversity exists within our church - or - What diversity is lacking?

## **READ 1 Cor 12:12-31**

1. How is the church one and many?
2. What types of people do we tend to reject from the community? (This can be overt actions or simple neglect and unwillingness to create welcoming spaces for diversity.)
3. Who gets and does not get honor at our church? How can we change that?

**Scenario:** You notice that there are fewer and fewer people under 35 in church. It seems like people come back to church when they have young families. One week, there is a college grad. who has come back to visit so you gather the nerve to ask her why people her age aren't coming to church. She lists some things that would involve major changes in the way we do church here.

1. What is your first reaction?
2. What makes you want to value (or devalue) her opinion?
3. What can you savor about them seeing the church and worshipping God differently?
4. How might valuing and acting on her opinion upset the unity at FPC? Is it worth it?

God is a relational God who chooses to bind himself to a diverse people. This might seem a recipe for chaos, but within the diversity is unity and order. We worship one God and hold one Savior and are indwelt by one Spirit. The vast diversity in Christians mirrors the vast character of God. When we savor diversity in unity, we can better understand and live out the nature of our mighty and meek God and better invite all people into communion with our Lord.

**PRAY TOGETHER.**

(Pray that the Spirit would give you greater gifts for the edification of FPC)

## DAILY Devotional

**MONDAY:** *READ:* Eph. 4:3-4. *THINK:* What unites us is stronger than what separates. Gender, race, age, orientation, and theological disposition are all formative powers in our lives, but they do not hold a candle to the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit acts to *Keep the Unity*, how can we let anything divide us? *PRAY:* that the Spirit would unite the diverse members of FPC into one body.

**TUESDAY:** *READ:* Gal. 3:28. *THINK:* This does not erase our particularities and homogenize us but destroys the dividing walls between groups. Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, all bring necessary insights about God. When we *Savor Diversity*, we come to know God through someone else's eyes. *PRAY:* that you would get to know someone who sees God differently.

**WEDNESDAY:** *READ:* Acts 2:7-12. *THINK:* When the Spirit comes in power, diverse peoples hear His words. People are awed at the power of God to reach each person in their own tongue. What power is there in a gospel that gathers only people that would gather anyway? When we *Savor Diversity*, we declare the power of God. *PRAY:* to see the Spirit move in power as in Acts at FPC.

**THURSDAY:** *READ:* Rev. 7:9-10. *THINK:* Isn't a multilingual chorus praising God a beautiful image? This is our hope that every knee bow and every tongue confess Jesus Lord and be gathered together with Him. No distrust, no hatred, no fear, but only the people of God in all their diversity worshipping their Maker together. When we *Savor Diversity*, we experience a bit of the promised place prepared for us. *PRAY:* that God would fill you with hope for the coming kingdom.

**FRIDAY:** *READ:* Col 3: 13-14. *THINK:* It would be naive to think that we can *Keep the Unity* and *Savor Diversity* unless we also *Forgive... Again*. In our brokenness, sometimes diversity rubs us the wrong way. We feel attacked or begin attacking. This *will* happen. We don't *Keep the Unity* and *Savor Diversity* by never always living together in perfect unity, but by taking the time to continually *Forgive... Again*. *PRAY:* the Spirit continually drives us back to forgiveness.

**SATURDAY:** *READ:* Col. 3:11. *THINK:* In each member of the Body, we see Christ. When we use diversity to cause dissension, we set Christ against himself. We are one body, one family, being united in and by God, but that work takes time. Do not see enemies in diversity, but *Keep the Unity* by seeing Christ as all and in all. *PRAY:* the Spirit would convict you of where you have set Jesus against Himself.