



Together Strong: We > Me (Part 2)

How To Come Together and Deal with the Disputes That Otherwise Tear Us Apart

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SERIES TEXT: "Where two or three gather TOGETHER in my name, there I am with them."
- Jesus, Matthew 18:20 BSB

BIG IDEA: We're better TOGETHER when tied to Jesus, "for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12 NLT).

How do we deal with disputes?

"I thought if I could put the praying people back together, I could put the world back together." - Little Girl

HOW TO COME TOGETHER AND DEAL WITH THE DISPUTES THAT OTHERWISE TEAR US APART

I. WELCOME THOSE WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS

- WELCOME with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. Romans 14:1a MSG
- *Jesus, please help. May I welcome and not exclude others, even when they see things differently than me.*

II. DO NOT BE QUICK TO JUDGE

- 4 X's Paul articulates we are *not* to judge:
 - 1) ... DON'T JUMP ALL OVER THEM every time they do or say something you don't agree with – even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Romans 14:1b MSG
 - 2) Who are you to JUDGE someone else's servant? Romans 14:4a NIV
 - 3) You, then, why do you JUDGE your brother or sister? Romans 14:10a NIV
 - 4) Let us no more criticize and blame and pass JUDGMENT on one another. Romans 14:13a AMP

Jesus, please help. May I forgive and not judge others.

III. DON'T LOOK DOWN ON OTHERS

- For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to CRITICIZING what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have business CROSSING PEOPLE OFF the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? Romans 14:2-4 MSG

Jesus, please help. May I stop criticizing and start caring more for even the irritating people I encounter this week.

IV. **DO THE NEXT RIGHT THING**

- Forget about deciding what's RIGHT for each other... Romans 14:13a MSG
- *adiaphora* ("non-essentials")
- What's important in all this is... if you eat meat, eat TO THE GLORY OF GOD and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables TO THE GLORY OF GOD and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. IT'S GOD WE ARE ANSWERABLE TO. Romans 14:6-7 MSG

Jesus, please help. May I do the next right thing for Your glory.

V. **ASSUME THE BEST ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTIVES**

- He who regards one day as special, does so TO THE LORD. He who eats meat, eats TO THE LORD, for he gives thanks TO GOD; and he who abstains, does so TO THE LORD and gives thanks TO GOD. Romans 14:6 NIV

Jesus, please help. May I give the benefit of the doubt and believe that others are seeking to do what is right.

VI. **BE SENSITIVE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S CONSCIENCES**

- Each person is free to follow the convictions of CONSCIENCE. Romans 14:5b MSG
- Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. Romans 14:13 NIV
- Here's what you need to be concerned about: that you don't get in the way of someone else, making life more difficult than it already is. Romans 14:13 MSG

Jesus, please help. May I be sensitive and work harder at winning the person over winning the argument.

VII. **HELP AND ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER**

- Let's agree to use all our energy in getting along with each other. HELP OTHERS with ENCOURAGING WORDS; don't drag them down by finding fault. Romans 14:19 MSG
- 2 ways to help prevent "quarreling over disputable matters" (Romans 14:1):
 - 1) Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. (Romans 14:19 NIV)
 - 2) Whatever you believe about these [disputable] things keep between yourself and God. (Romans 14:22 NIV)

Jesus, please help. May my life help to encourage a Jesus-centered unity and peace within a divided people.

VIII. **ALWAYS ACT IN LOVE**

- If you confuse others by making a big issue over what they eat or don't eat, you're no longer a companion with them in LOVE, are you? These, remember, are persons for whom Christ died. Romans 14:15 MSG
- When you sit down to a meal, your primary concern should not be to feed your own face but to SHARE THE LIFE OF JESUS. So be sensitive and courteous to the others who are eating. Don't eat or say or do things that might interfere with the free exchange of LOVE. Romans 14:21 MSG

Someone who I can call, email or text and share the love of Jesus with this week:
