

## Devotion to One Another

Romans 12:1-13; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-8-17

<sup>9</sup> *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. <sup>10</sup> *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; - Romans 12:9-10*

- 1. Love is to be real, not a ‘performance.’** *Let love be* without hypocrisy. (9) Hypocrisy = that which is faked, insincere, not genuine (‘acted out’). Judas’ kiss of death (Luke 22:48).
- 2. Love pursues what is pleasing to God.** Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. (9) Abhor = deep hatred, horror. Cling = idea of being glued to (‘married to’). Enoch and Noah ‘walked with God’ (Genesis 5:24; 6:9).
- 3. The pursuit of love must take place in a local expression of the family of God.** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.* (10) Devoted = special, tender affection (as in a family). Brotherly love = love like natural love in a family.
- 4. Love for one another is fed by an appreciation for what each one contributes to the life of the family.** Give preference to one another in honor; (10) give preference = rejoice in the good qualities of other believers (and maybe give them the benefit of the doubt regarding motives). The team concept = family concept = appreciation of the role each one plays (see context of Romans 12).

### *Application*

- 1. Church ‘membership’ is body language.** Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:27. There is a universal aspect to this (Colossians 1:18) and local expressions of this. (1 Corinthians 12:21)
- 2. Church membership is implied by the call to devotion, among other things (see reasons below).** Is Church membership biblical? We can’t find the phrase ‘church membership’ in the Bible. We don’t see a clear command to officially join a church. (Neither can we find a clear statement of the doctrine of the Trinity but we argue based on clear implications in Scripture) But there are clear indications that a real, conscious commitment to one local body of believers is the implied expectation that Christ has for every believer. All of these points are not as compelling as some, but the weight of the whole points convincingly toward what we call ‘church membership’.
  - The example of the early Church is that people believed and were baptized and were added to the church. - Acts 2:41-42, 47
  - If you read the NT carefully, the idea of being a ‘Lone Ranger Christian’ who is not committed to a local body of believers is foreign to the NT. - Acts 6:5; 8:1; 14:23; 15:17; 20:17)
  - Letters of commendation spoken of and seen in the NT imply church membership. - Acts 18:27; Romans 16:1-2
  - Lists of widows and possibly, lists of members also implies church membership (certainly there was an awareness of who was in the church at Rome). - 1 Timothy 5:9; Acts 5:14; 16:5
  - There appears to have been clear boundaries regarding the local churches. - 1 Corinthians 5:4; 14:23

- To be devoted you have to have something or someone to be devoted to. - Romans 12:10
- The NT letters were written to specific, defined gatherings of believers. (1 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:19)
- Believers are commanded not to forsake these specific, defined gatherings. – Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 11:33
- Church discipline commanded by Christ requires membership in a local church. - Matthew 18:15-18
- In order to be ‘put out of the church,’ you must first be ‘put in.’ - 1 Corinthians 5:11-13
- Submission to church leadership requires membership in a local church. - Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17
- Pastoral responsibility requires membership in a local church. - Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3
- Giving to support the ministry of the Word and the needy saints implies a commitment to a local body. – Galatians 6:6-8; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
- The election of ‘deacons’ to meet particular needs in the church implies church membership. - Acts 6:5
- The one another commands imply a commitment to a particular group of believers. – John 13:14; John 13:34; 15:17; Romans 12:10, 16; 14:19; 15:7; 16:16; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:2, 32; 5:19; Colossians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11, 13, 15; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 Peter 4:9
- The commands to serve and use your gifts to build up the church implies a commitment to a local body of believers. – Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10
- Accountability to other believers implies a commitment to a particular local church. – Romans 15:14; Ephesians 5:21; Colossians 3:16; James 5:16
- The metaphor of the body working together to glorify God and serve Christ implies a commitment to a local church. - 1 Corinthians 12:20-21, 27
- ‘Church’ (ekklesia) is the translation of the Greek word for ‘assembly’ or ‘gathering’ and speaks to the fact that Jesus intended the church to be a public institution as a testimony to the world. - Ephesians 3:10
- Identification with Christ through participation in the ordinances implies church membership. – Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 33-34
- There is a beauty in belonging to a local expression of the family of God and trusting God for good through an imperfect church over time. – Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:2, 32; Col. 3:13
- The testimony of the Church and godly men is on the side of affirming church membership.

**3. We want to bring everyone up to date on our core beliefs, core practice and core commitments as a local church.**

**4. We want to ask you to become a member of Coast or renew your commitment to Coast in light of the new additions made to our core documents.**

Because we all need to be clear on what we are about at Coast if we are to grow and move forward. Because of the changes to the bylaws especially. Because of the growing hostility to Christianity and the need for greater legal protection (with regard to church discipline, employment, etc.)