

QUESTION 5

- a) We are to think of the needs and concerns of others. Paul writes about considering them more important than ourselves.
- b) We are not to focus on ourselves.
- c) This doesn't mean that we should ignore our needs and desires. But to put them in second place.
- d) The key here is 'humility'.
- e) *"Christian humility genuinely regards others as being more important and valuable than oneself"* (Keddie).
- f) Humility was not a virtue that was admired in society at that time.
- g) It is not about running ourselves down.
- h) It is not about being a doormat and giving in to everyone come what may.
- i) Humility towards one another comes as a result of humility towards God. We recognise our dependence on Him (see **1 Peter 5:5-6**).

QUESTION 6

Examples:

- We are all one in Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection.
- Unity is an expression of our discipleship (see **John 13:35**).
- The world sees that unity and it points to Christ (see **John 17:21**).
- We need one another as we seek to live as strangers in the world. Especially when we face opposition.

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 6

QUESTION 1

- a) In our last study we suggested that **1:27-30** acts as a summary of the message that Paul wants to convey to the church in this letter.
- b) If that is the case, then the opening two words of chapter 2 are important: 'So if...' (or 'Therefore' in some translations). They act as a bridge.
- c) "So" indicates a deduction: as a result.
- d) "If" suggests an action resulting from what has been said: because this is true...
- e) Despite Paul's sufferings, his greatest concern is for the unity of the church. He's already stated this in **verse 27**. Now he returns to that thought.
- f) The church is to be different. With outside pressure; unity among the believers was essential.

QUESTION 2

- a) **'Encouragement in Christ'** refers to the outworking of being in Christ.
 - Paul takes his readers back to Christ. That's where our focus should always be. That's the basis of our unity.
 - We are one in Christ and therefore seek to walk with Christ; in a Christlike way.
 - *"No man can walk in disunity with his fellow-men and in unity with Christ. If he has Christ as the companion of his way, he is inevitably the companion of every wayfarer. A man's relationships with his fellow-men are no bad indication of his relationship with Jesus Christ"* (Barclay).

- b) **Love** binds us (see **1 John 4:7-12**).
- The love of Christ was poured out to me; although I didn't deserve it. I was the lost sheep He found.
 - I need to allow that love to flow through me to others.
- c) **Participation in the Spirit**. This refers to the oneness we have through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- That common eternal life that we have through the indwelling of that Spirit (see **1 Corinthians 12:13**).
 - It is the Spirit who enables us to live that life of love, which is the life of God
- d) **Affection and sympathy** go together. They are sometimes translated as 'affectionate sympathy'.
- The word for affections here is 'bowels'. The bowels were seen by the Jews as the seat of emotions. It's where you felt things. It's a longing.
 - The idea of sympathy here concerns the mercies of God.
 - It is something we should feel for our fellow believers.

QUESTION 3

- This is not a selfish request. Paul is not thinking of being happier himself.
- He is thinking about the characteristics of the church that would give him cause for joy.
- There is no doubt that there were issues in the church.
- Having dealt with the motives for unity, he now looks at the marks for unity.
- To be like minded doesn't mean that everyone has the same opinions. They do, however, have the same spirit and purpose. The same attitude. Spiritual unity comes from the heart. It's about walking according to the Spirit (**Romans 8:4b-5**).

- This comes from having the same love. This is the key to unity. A love for all God's people. It means loving everyone the same.
- Full accord: translates as 'one souled'; or 'knit deeply down in the harmony of the soul'. We are to be those who are knit together in unity. True unity is not organisational or outward; it is a matter of the heart. It is having the same passions: for God's glory; for the advance of the gospel; for Christ to be exalted.
- One mind: This is very similar to be like-minded (the same mind). Here it is to be of one mind. The New American Standard Bible translates this as being "intent on one purpose". The literal translation means "minding one thing". We have the same intent; advancing the kingdom of God.

QUESTION 4

- Three unworthy attitudes that are preceded by the word 'nothing'; indicating a total ban on them.
- Selfish ambition (or rivalry): A seeking of influence and position at the expense of others. Here is the desire for personal prestige. There is always the danger that people should work not to advance the work but to advance themselves.
- Conceit: literally means 'empty glory'. It refers to an enhanced view of oneself.
- The third one is a preoccupation with self in verse 4.
- All these put ourselves forward instead of Christ.