

## Summary:

The key point of unity is in the person and work of Jesus. He is the beginning and the end, and all things will be completed in Him. When all is said and done, we desire to be a people whom the LORD calls faithful friends of the Bridegroom. Our relationship with God and our relationships with each other matter more than total agreement on every question of doctrine and belief.

***“Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace have kissed.” Psalm 85:10***



P.O. Box 278 Dalton, Georgia 30722 1.800.903.9809 [www.relationshipchurch.com](http://www.relationshipchurch.com)

# Doctrinal Divide?

In many churches, having the same opinions on doctrine, or Biblical truth, is the basis for unity. At Relationship Church, we do not believe our unity is based on our doctrinal positions. Doctrine is very important, but this is what the Scriptures say our unity is to be based on:

*Ephesians 4:3-6 (NIV) “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

Our unity is based solely on our being a Christian filled with the Holy Spirit, believing that Jesus is our Lord and Savior.

In other words, if you are a Christian, then you have One Spirit in you confirming you are in One Body praying to One God and One Father producing One Faith in what Jesus did that gives us One Hope. This is the basis of our unity. All other Biblical truths are *NOT* a basis for dividing from your fellow brother and sister.

How does this work out practically in our church? As a community, we have made it our goal to live by the ancient Moravian Motto:

***“In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in both, charity.”***

Using this motto, we divide our doctrinal beliefs into two main categories: Essentials for Believers and Essentials for Leaders.

## Essentials for Believers

The first category, “Essentials for Believers”, are the truths we feel are necessary to be a Believer. This is important because this is the basis of our unity as Ephesians 4 just described. Many times, churches disagree on what beliefs are involved in becoming a Christian.

We have outlined the essential truths that we believe are required to be a Christian and for us to walk together as Believers. They can be summed up as follows (Scripture references available on our website):

*We believe in one eternal God, manifested in three persons - the Father, the Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, 100% God, 100% Man, and was born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Man was created in God's image. Adam, the first man, sinned, and as a result, brought physical and spiritual death into the world and separation from God. Jesus Christ shed his blood and died for our sins. Three days later He was resurrected from the dead and is now at the right hand of the Father God. Man's only way back to God is by believing in the works of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for us all. Salvation is a free gift, separate from works, to all who believe.*

*The one who dies without accepting Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior dies without his sins being forgiven. These sins keep him from fellowship with the Godhead and they are condemned forever.*

### *Essentials for Leaders*

What about other important Biblical truths? We believe that there is a second group of Biblical truths that are not essential for being a Christian, but are needed to help us walk out our new lives after salvation.

Frankly, it would be an impossible task for us to come into full agreement on all truths as mankind. Very simply, we do not possess the full understanding of Scripture. As we grow and mature as believers, we come to understand the truth better, but this takes time.

How do we live and walk together until we come to a fuller understanding of the Bible? Ephesians 4 says we are to walk in *peace*. We simply love and accept each other and wait together for the day when Jesus will reveal all truth.

Practically, how do we keep the church going forward in one direction without producing confusion? There is a subset of truths that our church leaders *voluntarily* agree on when they assume a leadership position. We call these truths "Essentials for Leaders". This is a small list, and we believe that those who do not agree can still be Christians. These are simply a set of truths that we have agreed to publicly support as leaders and teachers.

The items that our church leaders agree to believe in includes the full authority and inerrancy of Scripture, one eternal God manifested in the Trinity (*we reject the belief that Jesus alone is the entirety of God*), the current operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12:4-10*), and the function of the 5-Fold Offices (*Ephesians 4:11-13*).

As you can see the list is very simple and short. For those individuals who do not share these beliefs, we accept them as Christians and we offer our friendship and fellowship. We never wish to enter into a spirit of division or debate, but it would be difficult to work together in our local church ministry due to the differences of beliefs.

For example, if a person does not believe that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation today, then it is going to be frustrating for them to minister with someone who believes that prophetic words are a valid ministry tool. While this means it may be counter-productive to work closely in ministry, we are both Christians and can walk as friends!

Examples of areas that are outside of the Essentials categories include counseling methods, political leanings, and beliefs on proper and correct ways to school children, determine family size, etc. We do not choose to take a public stand on any of these topics, but leave it up to each individual believer to search the Scriptures and their hearts for themselves. We may offer a private opinion if asked, but will not impose our beliefs on anyone. *As leaders, we voluntarily lay down our rights to publicly teach those areas that are outside of the two Essentials categories.*

### *Our View on Eschatology (The End-Times)*

The topic of Eschatology is both intriguing and potentially divisive. As a community, we choose to operate in a spirit of respect, honoring the godliness of those whose viewpoints differ from ours.

In this context, we support two points of theology related to the End-Times: *We believe in the return of Jesus Christ and that He will return for a pure and spotless Bride that has made Herself ready.* Both of these viewpoints fall into the "Essentials for Leaders" category, meaning that our leaders agree to publicly support this view, but we do not see these beliefs as a requirement to salvation or fellowship.

While we do not publicly teach on eschatological subjects outside of these two items, we encourage personal study as well as private discussion with family and friends, not just on the End-Times, but on any subject that helps you to draw closer to Jesus.