

Gathering Question: Discuss some essential ingredients for a church to be healthy. What do you think is the most important thing that churches do? Explain your answer.

Love One Another

There are over thirty *one another* and *each other* passages in the New Testament. You can divide them into different categories to study them, such as the ones having to do with unity or hospitality or devotion or edification. It is possible to divide these verses into even more categories than these but there is one overarching idea that seems to shine through all these passages that we need to examine before we go any further with this study.

Love for *one another* overarches all the rest of the *one another and each other* passages. In fact, it is possible to understand all the other passages as a description of what it truly means to love one another. For Example, acceptance of one another is possible because we first have love for one another. Serving one another occurs because there is a basis of love behind it. Living in harmony can be a part of the Christian experience because we first have love for one another, etc. The overarching concern for Christians is to love one another and when that truly takes place everything else can fall into place.

Remember when the Pharisees asked Jesus about the greatest commandment recorded in Matthew 22:34ff? Jesus replied that the greatest commandment was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind but then he said the second is like the first. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. “All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.” What a powerful statement! Everything hangs of loving God and loving one another.

Read: John 13:34; I Peter 1:22; I John 3:11; Romans 12:10; Romans 13:8; I Corinthians 13.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Read Romans 12:10. Is there a difference between “brotherly love” and other kinds of love? Explain your answer.
2. In I Peter 1:22, what is the connection between obedience to the truth and love for the brethren? Describe “love one another deeply, from the heart.” What does Peter mean by that statement?
3. In John 13, discuss the relationship between doing and loving.
4. Describe how things would be different in the church if we all followed I Corinthians 13.