

*“Because there is one loaf, we, who are many,
are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:17

Just as the Trinity is one, so followers of Jesus are one. No matter how many schisms divide us, the supreme reality we are to incarnate is oneness. We belong to one another. We cannot apprentice ourselves to Jesus and live without regard for others.

What does Christian oneness and community look like? Scripture is replete with examples and directives that can shape healthy relationships and engender safe, thriving body life.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.” (Romans 13:8)

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.” (1 Peter 1:22)

“This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.” (1 John 3:11)

“And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.” (1 John 3:23)

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7)

“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” (1 John 4:11-12)

“And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.” (2 John 1:5)

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

“Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” (Hebrews 3:13)

BEAR ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS

“Each helps the other / and says to his brother, ‘Be strong!’ ” (Isaiah 41:6)

CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

“God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.” (1 Corinthians 12:24-25 NRSV)

ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER

“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:7)

“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” (Romans 14:1-4)

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31-32)

“The fruit of the spirit is . . . kindness.” (Galatians 5:22)

LIVE IN HARMONY WITH ONE ANOTHER

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.” (1 Peter 3:8)

FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

BE HOSPITABLE TO ONE ANOTHER

“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1 Peter 4:9)

“Be hospitable to one another without complaining.” (1 Peter 4:9 NRSV)

HONOR ONE ANOTHER

“Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)

BELONG TO ONE ANOTHER

“In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:5)

“We are members of one another.” (Ephesians 4:25 NRSV)

“Finally, brothers, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:11)

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.” (Hebrews 10:25)

“God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.” (1 Corinthians 12:24-25 NRSV)

BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love [mutual affection].” (Romans 12:10)

SPEAK TRUTHFULLY TO ONE ANOTHER

“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices.” (Colossians 3:9 NRSV)

“So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.” (Ephesians 4:25 NRSV)

TEACH ONE ANOTHER

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16)

AGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER

“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4)

WORSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart

to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 5:19-20)

LAY DOWN YOUR LIVES FOR ONE ANOTHER

“We know love by this, that [Jesus] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.” (1 John 3:16 NRSV)

DO NOT PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:25-26 NRSV)

DO NOT GRUMBLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER

“Do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!” (James 5:9 NRSV)

DO NOT ENVY ONE ANOTHER

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:25-26 NRSV)

SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING THE SCRIPTURAL “ONE ANOTHERS” INTO PRACTICE

Any of the suggestions found below can be done with a prayer partner, accountability partner, mentor or spiritual director. They are also suitable for small group interaction and follow-up.

1. Choose a “one another” that you want to become a hallmark of your life. Consider why this “one another” is important to you. Picture what practicing the “one another” will cost you. It could cost you time, money and a variety of self-indulgent moods and behaviors. Commit yourself to practicing the “one another” every day for two weeks. At the end of each day, notice where you lived your “one another.” Where did you not live your “one another”? Seek grace to continue to incarnate Christ’s self-donating love. At the end of two weeks, consider whether or not you should dedicate two more weeks to intentionally living your “one another.” Do you feel called to move on to a different one?
2. When and how have you received the “one another” love and encouragement found in Scripture? Which “one anothers” did or didn’t you receive growing up? How have these affected your attitude to “one another” directives? Talk to Jesus about your experiences. Offer him your desire around “one another” living.
3. On a monthly basis focus on a particular “one another.” If you are in a small group, you might call a month “Encourage One Another Month.” During that month, each participant opens his or her heart to encourage others in the group. At the end of the month meet to discuss what this was like for all of you. What touched you most deeply? What was most difficult? How did you find God in the “one anothers?”
4. Consider the people in your world that have little experience of the biblical “one anothers.” How could you intentionally bring a “one another” experience to these people? Plan a time to do so.