

Who's Flock?

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If you knew you had just one night left to live, how would you spend it? Jesus spent his teaching and praying for his disciples and "... for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." He prayed: "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

In the early church divisions were urgently dealt with. Paul wrote: "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." To the church in Corinth he wrote "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you.

What I mean is this: One of you says 'I follow Paul'; another, 'I follow Apollos'; another, 'I follow Cephas'; still another 'I follow Christ'. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" While he always stressed the need for truth and holiness he cautioned his student Titus "...avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him."

Today there are over 33,000 rec-

ognized denominations yet attempts by ecumenically minded leaders to call Christians to unity often meet with stiff opposition, even from members of own denominations. Jesus warned "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" and "They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God." In 1966 Dr. Bob Jones responded to former student Billy Graham's efforts to work with Christians of other denominations by insisting that he would expel any student caught attending any of Billy's services in Greenville. He urged people to pray "Dear Lord, bless man who leads Christian people into disobeying the word of God, whom prepares the way for Antichrist by building the

apostate church and turning his so-called converts over to infidels and unbelieving preachers."

Is God even now quietly calling you to kneel and wash the feet of your neighbour in the church next door? Just how uncomfortable will you allow yourself to get to serve him who is servant of all? And anyway, just who's flock is it?

John 17:20-21 (Bible quotations from NIV)
John 17:22 Ephesians 4:3-6

1 Corinthians 10-13 Titus 3:9-10
World Christian Encyclopedia (2001) by David B. Barrett

John 15:20 John 16:2
'A Prophet With Honor – The Billy Graham Story' by William Martin, P 318

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