

Holding It Together
#1: How To Hold On To Unity

1. Elevate the _____
John 17:11 *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.*

a) Make the decision that _____

b) Distinguish between the _____

Romans 14:1 *Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.*

c) Keep your _____

Romans 14:22 *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.*

d) _____ those who are different

Romans 14:3 *Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them.*

2. _____

Commitment #1: I will not _____

1 Corinthians 13:7 *...love protects...*

Commitment #2: I will believe that _____

1 Corinthians 13:7 *Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful...*

Commitment #3: I will _____

1 Corinthians 13:5 *It is not irritable...*

Commitment #4: I will _____

1 Corinthians 13:4 *and endures through every circumstance.*

Commitment #5: I will be _____

Galatians 6:1-2 *Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.*

Romans 12:18 *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

Matthew 18:15-17 *If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense...*

Guidelines for Truth-Telling
Author unknown

First, identify the real obstacle. Take time to determine the real issue. Is it hurt feelings? Is it a history of dishonesty? Do you feel neglected? Misunderstood? Some find it helpful to organize their thoughts on paper.

Second, arrange to meet the person face-to-face as soon as possible. Jesus tells us that if we have a problem in a relationship we should meet with that person in private (Matt. 18:15). Paul says we should do it as soon as possible. (Eph 4:26). The longer we stay in pseudo community, the more the relationship deteriorates.

Third, when you meet, affirm the relationship before you open the agenda. "I care about you and I value our relationship. I want our marriage to be all it can be, and I believe it has the potential to be mutually satisfying in every way. But I need to talk to you about a few things that are standing in the way."

Fourth, make observations rather than accusations. Human beings tend to do what animals do when they're attacked: they strike back. Don't put up your dukes and start throwing punches. Say, "Look, I'm feeling hurt by some things that happened. I'm sure it was unintentional, but can we talk about it?" Or... "I'm sensing a change in our relationship. I don't feel as comfortable with you anymore. I'd like your input." That opens the way for dialogue that can lead to true community.