

Ephesians 5: 21 – 33

God's New Community on the front line

The church

- A battleground of grace – loving the sinner, rooting out the sin
Eph 4:17
- A training ground –
 - Learning to live together in unity
 - Learning to live as God's people in a hostile world

The church is to be a community that is united, loving, different (Holy). 'The divine family ceases to be a credible concept if it is not itself sub-divided into human families which display God's love.' (J Stott, Message of Ephesians)

Learning to submit 5:21 – 24

- Jesus teaches and Paul affirms the dignity of womanhood, childhood and work
- Jesus teaches and Paul affirms the equality before God of all human beings Galatians 3:28
- Submission is not another word for inferior
- All authority is God given. God is a God of order
- Authority is not to be used selfishly. (5:1,2)

Husbands and Wives 5:22 – 33

- Wives submit to your husbands (1 Cor 11: 3 – 12, 1 Tim 2: 11 – 13) Gen 1 & 2
- Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. V24
- Paul stresses the husband's love for his wife, not his authority over her.

Digging Deeper

Read Ephesians 5: 21 – 33

1. What is in today's culture that makes it difficult to talk about submission? Can you remember a time when this was not so difficult?
2. From verse 21 what is the motivation Paul highlights? How does this help us to understand what is involved in submitting to one another?
3. What are the benefits of submission and what are the conditions that makes submission a good thing? Look back at 5:1 -2
4. What does it look like for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her?
5. What can husbands do to be more loving?
6. What can wives do to submit to and respect their husbands?
7. Strong loving marriages are a powerful testimony to God's grace. How can both the married and unmarried support one another to create and sustain marriages in God's new community?