



**“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”**  
**2 Peter 1:21**

## Steps to Harmony in a Local Church, Part Two

by Alex Hale

God expects us to be united. He has never asked anything of us that we cannot deliver, and so when He says for there to be unity within a congregation, He is commanding something that is physically possible and should be done. However, unity is not something that will come easily. Unity is not achieved by a mere statement, “Let’s be united.” Cheerleaders can yell “W-I-N” at football games, but that does not make their team win, and we can yell “U-N-I-T-Y” but that does not make us have unity in the church. Maintaining harmony in a local church is hard (Ephesians 4:3). As we discussed in last week’s article, steps to harmony within a local church include **respecting the church leaders** (Hebrews 13:17) and **avoiding unneeded controversy** (Titus 3:9). Today I want to share with you two other steps.

### 3. Confront divisive people when necessary

**Titus 3:10 (ESV) As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.**

A divisive person is someone who is threatening the unity of the church, not just someone who disagrees with you! With that said, there are times when a person’s divisive spirit, false teaching, or immoral lifestyle threaten to harm the body of Christ. In those cases, such an individual should be confronted.

How do we go about fulfilling this command (Matthew 18:15-17)? You should first *speak personally* with the individual about your concerns. If the person will not listen, then you should *take two or three witnesses*. If the individual will still not listen, then you *bring the matter before the church*. If the individual continues to refuse to repent, the elders should take further action. After repeated warnings, the church should withdraw fellowship.

Putting up with a divisive person in the church “to avoid problems” is like putting up with a cancerous tumor to avoid the pain of surgery. You must operate so that you can continue to be alive and healthy. If the church is going to continue winning souls and changing the lives of people for the better, then you must maintain unity. In order to do this, at times difficult actions must be taken.

### 4. Be quick to forgive

**Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.**

This past week the news has been buzzing with the Amber Guyger trial in Dallas. Guyger, a now-fired police officer, was convicted of murder for her involvement in the death of 2016 Harding graduate Botham Jean. The most fascinating part of the entire trial and sentencing was Jean’s younger brother, Brandt, who told Guyger that he loved her and wanted the best for her, encouraging her to give her life to Christ.

If he can forgive someone who killed his brother, why can’t we forgive the slights that we face? Furthermore, if the God of heaven can forgive, why can’t we forgive one another? As we mature in Christ, we should become more harmonious, not more contentious. Peace is a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). If it hurts the Father when we fight, it just as surely brings joy to His heart when we are able to maintain unity.



## CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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[cabotwestsidechurchofchrist.com](http://cabotwestsidechurchofchrist.com)  
[facebook.com/cabotwestside](https://facebook.com/cabotwestside)

### When We Meet

#### Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am  
 Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

#### Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

### Our Elders

R.D. Hopper  
 Norman Kemper

### Our Deacons

Troy Hunter  
 Kelly Kendall  
 Tony Ramick

### Our Preacher

Alex Hale