

Edify – Encourage – Encounter – Engage

Romans 15:1-16 / Scripture Reading Romans 15:1-7

Fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) requires a team with commitment. We call it a church. What does that look like? Here are a few descriptions from Romans chapter fifteen:

Edify – Romans 15:1-3

The goal is to build up others and to advance the interests of God's Kingdom. Chapter fourteen showed many diversions that can split up a church: varying degrees of understanding and convictions. Patience and grace is needed while people grow and apply truth to their lives. See Romans 14:17-19; Philippians 2:1-16.

Encourage – Romans 15:4-7

We need to get more than instruction about doctrine from Scripture. We need comfort and encouragement. As we desire to grow in the unity of the faith, we need to have an environment of grace for people to grow spiritually. As a church, we will not survive doctrinal growth unless we also experience growing in grace (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:1-15; Galatians 6:1-10). We have one reason to love and receive each other: Christ received us. See Ephesians 4:30-31; 6:24.

Encounter – Romans 15:13-14

Growing in number and growing spiritually necessitates that problems will arise (Acts 6:1). We need to encounter problems and growing pains with love, grace and truth. See Colossians 3:12-17; I Peter 4:7-10.

Engage – Romans 15:15-16 cp. Romans 15:8-12

The church is not just a club, trying to perfect and care for itself. The whole world is in need of the gospel and the life-changing power of Christ. Paul reminded the Jewish believers that God had always had the Gentiles in mind for salvation too. Though seemingly uninterested and possibly hostile to the gospel, the people that are in the world have been on God's mind since before the foundation of the world. We need to share God's interest and love for people. We need to engage them in the challenge of gospel truth. We need to see people as something God wants us to offer to Him.

See John 1:4-5,9-14,16-17; 3:16-21; 10:14-16; 12:44-50; Luke 9:51-56; 24:44-48; Revelation 22:17.