A Holy nation

Israel was called to be “a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6). The church in the New Testament is “a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9) because God has called it out of the world and sanctified it by the blood of Christ and by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Holiness includes harmony (not uniformity).

**Jesus Christ cares about the harmony of His church.**

**1. *Personal*** **disputes often disrupt the harmony of the church** (Exodus 18:13-16)

**2. God has *appointed* shepherds to restore the harmony of the church** (Exodus 18:21-24)

**3. Shepherds must know God’s *law* and seek His face to deal with dis-harmony in the church** (Exodus 18:19-20)

**4. God expects His people to *obey* their shepherds for the harmony of the church** (Exodus 18:17-18)

Hebrews 13:17

**5. Some particular *causes* of disputes that disrupt the harmony of the church**

A. An inability to discern what is *important*

B. An unwillingness to accept the other’s *viewpoint*

C. An insistence on strictness rather than *grace*

Proverbs 19:11

**6. Three great *motivations* for pursuing harmony in the church**

A. The *love* of Christ for you (Ephesians 4:29-32)

B. The *seal* of the Spirit in you

C. *Fellowship* with your Father (Matthew 6:12-15)

**For additional study or family discussion**

1. What did the Lord say to you today through His word? Did you learn some new truth about God or yourself? Did the Lord challenge you, convict you, or encourage you?

2. What principles of church harmony do you see in the following passages?

Ephesians 4:4-6

Ephesians 4:25-32

Colossians 3:8-17

John Calvin (1509-1564), who insisted on the necessity of church discipline, also wrote –

*Nevertheless those of whom we speak are themselves at fault, for they go to extremes. Whenever our Lord asks them to show mercy, they disregard it and display the utmost harshness and severity. For in judging that the church exists only where there is perfect purity and holiness of life, they withdraw from God’s church on the pretext that they hate all faults, thinking that they are shunning the company of evil men. They protest that the church of Jesus Christ is holy, yet they should heed what he himself says of it: it is a mixture of the good and the bad* (John Calvin, *Institutes,* 1541 edition, 268).