

Taking It Home

One—“We, being many, are one body in Christ” (Romans 12:5).
E pluribus unum. Out of many, one. One body. One heart. One Lord. One Church.

Today, we especially thank (*name today's honorees*) for serving our Savior here among us. We thank our Savior for their service. And we pray our Lord's continuing blessings on that service as they help all of us grow up into Christ, as we build each other up in love.

As a small token of our thanks, please accept (*name the gift you're giving*). Each time you use it, we hope you remember our warm thanks for your service among us.



Thank You for Serving the Savior

Introduction

One—It's not a big number. It's not a complicated number. Anyone who can talk can count to one! No big deal!

The Bible, though, does make a big deal of it—of oneness, of unity.

Today we gather to celebrate the contributions of—not just one—but many people who have been instruments of our Savior's blessing in our lives together here at (*name your church or organization*). As we do that, I invite you to join me in focusing for a few minutes on several key *ones* that Scripture accents.

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The Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Getting to the Heart

One Body. We start by considering Romans 12:5: “So we, being many, are one body in Christ.” The Great Seal of the United States contains the Latin phrase: *e pluribus unum*. Literally, it means “out of many, one.” In other words, “We’re all in this together.” The motto accurately describes our nation, to be sure. But how much better it fits the one, holy Christian Church!

Our Savior unites people from every nation under heaven, from every era in human history, from every economic and educational status. We are one—in Christ. This unity is not something we could have dreamed up or made possible. In fact, one of the best evidences of the sin in our hearts is the human tendency toward prejudice and hatred. We’re one with some—a few friends and family members. But our bent is to focus on differences, on *otherness* in those around us. It leads us to loveless thoughts and actions. We can’t fix this in ourselves, and these sins stain us before God.

How good to know, then, that Jesus died on the cross to remove the guilt of those sins—and all our other sins as well. Knowing his forgiveness opens the door of love into our hearts. Christ’s forgiveness enables us to walk through that door to love other people—even those who are very different from us. Politics, tastes, skin color, traditions, language, clothing—all these and more may differ, but those who belong to Christ by faith are one body in Jesus, and we show his care and commitment to each other in many tangible ways, ways too numerous to count.

One Heart. Our Savior cherishes and cares for each of us. He also places his calling on each of our individual lives. Then he gifts us for our callings. Those callings differ. Some of us are great administrators. Some of us teach with passion and skill. Some of us have mechanical abilities. Some of us readily comfort, counsel, and console the confused and hurting. We each play an important part in the body of Christ—no matter what our calling or giftedness.

This leaves no room for false humility. None of us as an “ear” in the body of Christ can complain that we don’t belong because we’re not an eye (1 Corinthians 12:16). Instead of envying the gifts of others, we can enjoy and celebrate them, thanking Jesus for them.

There’s no room for ungodly pride, either. As one body part, we can’t tell other body parts we don’t need them (1 Corinthians 12:21). Instead, we can look for more ways to use our gifts to help others—anonymously when we can, humbly when our service is visible. We thank Jesus for equipping us to help and making us willing to do that.

Each part of Christ’s body needs each other part. As we grow in that understanding, the Holy Spirit knits our hearts more and more tightly together in unity and love—one heart—a heart of concern for others.

One Lord. The Holy Spirit distributes his gifts as *he* wills. He is the Lord of his Church, and as Lord, he makes it very clear that he gifts each of us for the good of others. Your gifts are not for you; they are for me and for your other brothers and sisters here at (*name your church or organization*). My gifts are not for me; they are for you and for my other brothers and sisters here. Your gift of hospitality is one blessing God works in my life. My gift of teaching is one of the blessings God in grace gives to you.

As we serve, our Lord asks us to do that with cheerfulness and to the best of our ability (Romans 12:8). Praise God, he works in us what he asks of us.

One Church. Ephesians 4 describes some of the *people gifts* Jesus gave to his Church after he ascended to heaven—the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. The main focus of the chapter, though, is on the unity of the faith Jesus creates in his Church and our focus knowing Christ and growing up into Christlikeness as we build each other up in love.