

NEW CREATION

:A new way to be church [Ephesians 4:1-16]

1. Comparison rips us apart, humility draws us together (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Paul urges the Ephesians to live lives worthy of their calling by showing humility, gentleness, patience, and grace towards one another, recognising that healthy Christian community requires working through differences rather than being divided by them. Because we are one body in Christ, we are called both to bear with one another in love and to speak the truth in love, keeping unity and God's mission at the centre of our relationships.

2. We all have permission and gifts to be on God's team (Ephesians 4:7-12)

Paul reminds us that we all are invited to have a place on God's team - not just being tolerated and that these gifts are not reserved for a select few but are given to equip the whole body for ministry. Whether through the gifts apostleship, prophecy, evangelism, pastoring or teaching, the goal is not personal but helping one another grow towards maturity and completeness in Christ.

3. God wants us to thrive in maturity, reflecting Christ (Ephesians 4:13-16)

Paul's vision is that the church would grow into maturity, becoming more like Christ as each person plays their part in a healthy, loving community. Rather than remaining spectators who observe and criticise from the sidelines, followers of Jesus are called to be active participants in God's work, using their gifts to help the whole body grow and thrive.

DISCUSS

Starter: Which of the 5-fold gifts from verse 11 excite you or intimidate you the most?

In what areas are we likely to compare with others (favourably or unfavourably) and what affect does that have on our desire/ability to contribute?

Looking over the page, if you're being honest with yourself, which column (service spectator, exhausted player or thriving player) most resonates with you right now. What do you think God wants to show you about this?

Is there a person you know who most exhibits the thriving player? What does this look like, and what affect has that had on you?

We believe our God-given vision is see: thriving communities springing up, where everyone can belong and find hope in Jesus.

Group Sunday message notes 2026



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The service spectator	The exhausted player	The thriving player	Coach Paul's Insight
Complaining about other people because they are different and don't understand how we 'do things round here'	Tired of "bearing with" others when it feels I always have to adapt to everyone else's norms.	Making allowances for people's faults and believing the best in one another	<i>"...with all humility and gentleness, ... bearing with one another in love..." (v. 2)</i>
Wanting to be entertained, get my spiritual 'fix', and out of in time for lunch	Stepping back because of pain, or not feeling my contribution is valued	Always seeking to encourage and build up those around me	<i>"...for building up the body of Christ..." (v. 12)</i>
Seeing leaders as only there to serve my needs. The church is 'other' to me	Feeling leadership doesn't seem to get my life-stage or circumstance	Seeing role of leadership to release me in playing my part in each season	<i>"...to equip God's people for the work of ministry..." (vv. 12)</i>
Wishing the preacher or worship was as good as the new one we saw on YouTube	Experiencing real life as 'too real' and overwhelming. Relationships are hard	Pressing in to what God wants to say to our local community in the reality of real relationships	<i>"...so that we are not... carried about by every wind of doctrine..." (v. 14)</i>
Not wanting to be part of this community until it changes to my liking	Feeling like everything is moving too fast and my concerns aren't understood	Speaking hard truths, but sharing them in genuine love so we can mature	<i>"...speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him" (v. 15)</i>
Focusing only on my preferences – song choices, length of sermon, quality of coffee	Needing time to rest, recover and seek God for this new season. Perhaps playing my part will look different?	Asking how did I contribute today? How did we make space for those who don't belong?	<i>"...when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (v. 16)</i>

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