

First Corinthians Thirteen in Our Assemblies

Calvin Lashway

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(Formerly entitled *Loving One Another in Our Assemblies*)

In the New Testament there are thirteen references that Christians should love one another (John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11,23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 1:5). In what is the most famous of these references Jesus says:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35; all scriptures quoted are from the *New American Standard Bible* unless otherwise stated).

This love for one another becomes an important sign identifying who Jesus' disciples are. If someone were to visit our assembly on the Sabbath, would they see our love for one another? Would they see a gathering of Jesus' disciples? How are we to love one another when we assemble with other Christians? 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 provides us with some answers.

Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant (verse 4).

*When assembling with our brethren we must be patient with one another's shortcomings and irritating personalities.

*A gathering of brethren provides us with an opportunity to be kind.

*We mustn't be jealous of what others have, such as spiritual gifts and responsibilities.

*Nor brag about our gifts and responsibilities.

*Or be arrogant and proud by thinking we are superior to others.

[Love] does not act unbecomingly ["rude," *New King James Version*]; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered (verse 5).

*During an assembly, we are polite to each other and not rude.

*We approach a gathering seeking to give to others, not looking for others to give to us.

*We aren't easily provoked or upset over something someone says or does.

*We avoid keeping track of the wrongs done to us by our brethren.

[Love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth (verse 6).

*We take no joy in the exposure of the sins and shortcomings of others.

*Instead we focus on God's truth with rejoicing. We can do this in prayer, songs and conversation with our brethren.

[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (verse 7).

*During our assemblies, we must put up with each other's weakness and faults.

*Not being suspicious and mistrustful of the motives and actions of others.

*Having a positive approach towards what others do and say, hoping for the best.

*Sometimes all we can do is endure our brethren's weaknesses and faults.

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away (verse 8).

*We never abandon or give up on a fellow member of our congregation; Even if we have to discipline them by asking them to stay away from our assembly.

By applying the principles of 1 Corinthians 13 in our assemblies. All who visit with us will know we are Jesus' disciples because they will see the love we have for one another.