

Renewal overview 7. Becoming One. John 17:20 - 26

Looking back, I still marvel at the 'Mission Impossible' that regularly confronted my primary school's 'Beginner's Band' teacher. At the commencement of each school year this brave man would enter a noisy band room full of young musicians who knew little to nothing about music. Some were apprehensive while others were wildly enthusiastic. But whatever the case, this man's job was not only to teach these students how to play their various instruments, but also to lead this chaotic cacophony toward becoming a musically harmonious unit. In the same way, Christ certainly wants his individual followers to become his mature disciples. However, his greater aim is to lead a diverse collection of believers from around the world into becoming a unified body called 'the Church'. Shortly before going to the cross Jesus said to his Father, *"I pray... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you"* (John 17:20 - 21 TNIV).

"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30). This is an extraordinary statement of Christ's relationship with his Heavenly Father. These words not only speak of Christ's divine nature, they also tell us of the mission he was on with his Father. For example, when explaining why he healed a paralysed man on a Sabbath day of rest Jesus said, *"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."* (John 5:17). We see another example of Jesus' oneness with his Father in his words, *"I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."* (John 8:28). In other words, Jesus demonstrated his unified purpose with his Father by faithfully doing the work his Father gave him to do. As Christ's body, we are called to do the same.

In just a couple of months our church will be participating in 40 Days of Community. The slogan of this campaign is, 'Better Together'. During this six week series we will learn what it means that God has: commissioned us to reach out together; chosen us to fellowship together; connected us to grow together; called us to serve together; and created us to worship together. Furthermore, we will learn that the more we are united in Christ's love, the more effective we'll become in fulfilling these purposes as his body.

Jesus Christ has already prayed that his people will become one just as he and the Father are one (and Christ's prayers for us are powerful and effective). Therefore, let's unite our prayers with his so that we will grow to become one body under Christ's headship, striving with the Holy Spirit's power, to do the perfect will of our Heavenly Father. This is our testimony to the world and the way we give glory to God.

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1. Who are the 'those' that Jesus prays for who will believe in Jesus through the message of the apostles? (John 17:20)
2. What does Jesus mean when he says that he wants us all to become one just as he and the Father are one? (17:21)
3. How is the Church's unity a testimony to the world? (17:21 - 23)
4. In what sense is our oneness also our God-given glory? (17:22)
5. What does Jesus mean that he wants us to be with him where he is, and to see his glory? (17:24)
6. In 17:25 - 26 Jesus contrasts the world's ignorance of God with his followers' knowledge of God. How is our knowledge of God connected to our relationship with him?
7. Describe what you think our church would look like if we became one just as the Father and the Son are one.
8. Please take time to unite your prayers to Christ's prayer that his church will become one just as he is one with the Father.