

# God's Aim for Churches

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, please turn your Bible to Ephesians chapter 4, verses 7 to 16.

! And we're continuing to work our way through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. And this morning we have come to a particular section of the letter that is quite a contrast to what we have been considering so far in the last five sermons.

From verse 11 of chapter 2 to verse 6 of chapter 4, Paul has been stressing the importance of the unity of God's people because through the cross, Christ has reconciled all people, Jews and Gentiles and whatever the distinctions are, to God and to one another.

And what we saw in the last sermon in this series, in Ephesians 4, verses 1 through 6, Paul was pleading with the church that they would endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But this morning we come to a passage where we see the Apostle Paul going on to point out the diversity of gifts that God gives to his people. And in essence what he's saying is the church is joined in unity but exists in diversity.

[ 1 : 38 ] And although we tend to think of diversity as being a challenge to unity, God doesn't think about it that way. God's design is to use diversity to bring us into unity.

And so with that introduction, let's read the text. Please follow along as I read Ephesians chapter 4 beginning in verse 7.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Therefore it says, He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

[ 3 : 07 ] And of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Let's pray together. Father, would you open our hearts now as we hear your word. Lord, again, would you do for us in this moment what we have sung in song that you would speak.

And Lord, I again cry out for your help, that I would be faithful to your word. I pray that you would keep me from error. And I pray that you would use the preaching of your word for the building of this church and for the glory of your great name.

Lord, help us to see the wisdom that you have displayed in how you have chosen to build your church.

[ 4 : 52 ] We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen. This passage that we have before us, the Apostle Paul is saying to the Ephesian believers, and essentially, he is really saying this to all believers.

What he is saying is that Christ gives members of his church diverse gifts to unify them and to mature them in him.

Christ gives members of his church diverse gifts to unify them and to mature them in him. And by diverse gifts, what is meant is gifts that are different in and of themselves, but also different in terms of measure, in terms of degree.

So even where you would find two persons who receive the same gift from Christ, there is no expectation that we can draw from Scripture that those gifts are in the same measure and degree. God gives different giftings and different degrees of giftings to people as he sovereignly chooses. And so, we know in reality that sometimes this could be a recipe for a lot of division and strife. [ 6 : 25 ] We know that this could be a recipe for hindering maturity. But that's not the reason that Christ has given gifts.

the reason he's given these gifts is so that we might be unified in our faith and we might be mature in him.

So this morning I want us to consider this passage and I must confess I have more notes than I realize we have time so I'm going to do my best to really condense and try to help us to grasp what is being said to us in this passage.

But there are three particular points I want to draw from the passage and they are number one diversity and gifts number two unity and faith and number three maturity in Christ.

So let's consider first what Paul says about diversity and gifts. Again, it's important to remember that Paul has been making the case for the unity of God's people and pleading that we would endeavor to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace because that is what Christ sacrificed his life for to bring us to God but to also bring us to one another removing the hostilities removing the strife and all the things that separate us and to bring us together and Paul is saying this is a precious thing endeavor to keep it but now we see Paul introducing something that seems to be contrasting what he has already been saying notice that verse 7 begins with the word but he says but grace was given to each one of us and if you underline in your Bible you should underline each one of us if it's not already underlined grace is given to each one of us according to the measure of [ 8 : 38 ] Christ's gift here Paul is not talking about saving grace he's already addressed saving grace in the earlier chapters God has given us saving grace but I believe what we can call this gift that he is referring to here in verse 7 is we can call it serving grace a serving gift God has given us a gift to serve it is a way that we serve one another and we are served by one another and all of these gifts that are given to us are given to us sovereignly not based on merit not based on request but based on Christ's sovereign design and one of the things to remember is that God's plans for us are comprehensive now sometimes you may find that there may be some natural way that God has made you made me and he may give us particular gifts which are really spiritual gifts that may complement the way that he has made us but we need to distinguish between what we may consider natural gifts that even unbelievers have and the spiritual gifts that we are looking at this morning that Christ sovereignly bestows now we should remember that these gifts are given to each of us but they're not just given for us they're given in terms of us individually they're given for the purpose of serving one another and what that looks like is that we serve each other with our gifts so I serve you and you serve me and we serve all one another and that's the way

God intended this to be notice the basis for these gifts it's in verse 8 Paul writes therefore it says when he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men now if you have an English standard version Bible that word men would have a footnote to it and the footnote will say that this word can mean men and women it can refer to men and women and in the context it has to be men and women because we see in verse 7 that this this grace this gift is given to each of us every one of us meaning males and females now Paul is quoting in verse 8 from Psalm 68 verse 18 and Paul interprets

Psalm 68 verse 18 to be referring to Christ referring to Christ and his triumph in his death and in his resurrection and how he took Satan and all of the satanic foes how he defeated them and he paraded them openly and this is more in a spiritual sense because this didn't happen physically but in reality this happened in his death and in his resurrection Christ defeated Satan and Satanic forces and made a show of them openly scripture says paraded them openly but he does something else and this is a draw on what happened in those days when kings went to battle when kings went to battle and they won they would bring the defeated foe and parade them in the streets but they would also parade the looting they would also parade the bounty the goods that they actually came into possession of because they defeated their enemy in those days it was largely possessions whether it was people or whether it was animals and wheat and grain and other kinds of provisions today of course the spoils of war is land we're seeing that taking place right now in the war in Ukraine where Russia is grabbing land of Ukraine and with that land comes wealth and resources and so forth and so

Paul is drawing on that and he's saying something very similar happened when Christ defeated satanic forces Christ also gave gifts to his people he had a bounty from which he gave gifts to his people and he did this in connection with his ascension and I think at this point it's important for us to think about spiritual gifts in a broad way here they're referred to as gifts that Christ is giving but when we talk about spiritual gifts and we say these are gifts that the spirit gives he's not talking about two different sets of gifts!

1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 that list a number of spiritual gifts these are in truth the gifts of our triune God and here's how we know that the spirit the holy spirit proceeds from the father and the son the father and the son sent the spirit when the son ascended back to heaven and you may remember that Jesus ascended to heaven 40 days after his resurrection and then 10 days later on the day of Pentecost the spirit was given and with the spirit came all the gifts and so the gifts can be referred to as the gifts of Christ or the gifts of God or the gifts of the spirit or the gifts of our triune God and so I think that's really important for us to understand that these gifts that Paul is talking about here are spiritual gifts gifts now in verses 9 and 10

[14:58] Paul is simply explaining Christ's condescension to the earth leaving his heavenly throne and then his ascension back to heaven after he had accomplished the work of redemption that's what this parenthetical part of what Paul is saying is addressing now some of you may be aware that these verses have some debate around them in terms of exactly what it means to descend to the earth to descend to the regions of the earth and time and space and the purpose for the sermon this morning really I don't think it would be wise to delve into that but if you have an interest in that feel free to talk with me afterwards and we can explore that and talk about what it means and the reason

I'm not going to address it this morning is to establish the point that I've made that all it is saying is that Christ came to the earth and it is really low where he came when you consider where he came from in heaven and then he ascended back that's all it's really saying but to get into the debate would move me into some other scriptures which I think will get us a bit of course this morning so here's what I would say about this and as I was studying this I was mindful of some of our students and so I see Andre here this morning and any of the other students who are taking their national exams hopefully some of the things that I would say this morning from this sermon this and one other thing I'm going to say I think will be beneficial to you your education and a refresher for the rest of us in our education as well one of the ways that you can read anything that you're reading is if it's properly written anything that's in parenthesis you should be able to remove and the sentence will still make sense if it's properly written and this is properly written and so if we take out verses 9 and 10 and just lay it aside parenthetically because it's in parentheses the sentence would make absolute sense so let me just show you how that works just follow from verse 7 but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of

Christ's gift therefore it says when he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men now we're going to jump to verse 11 and he gave and you see the point that Paul is making Paul is not into a debate as to where Jesus descended that's not the point that he is making he's making the point that Christ gave gifts to his people and so when we come to verse 11 and he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of stature of the fullness of Christ so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by human cunning by craftiness and deceitful schemes so you're able to see that we're able to read past the parenthetical part and get the sense of what is being written and this is very important when you're trying to understand something and there's something parenthetical if it's properly written remove the parenthetical part get the sense of it and you'll be able to navigate your way through what is actually being said that's the point that

Paul is making Christ has given gifts to his people and this is the next point he has given some gifts to equip them so in verses 11 and 12 look at them again verses 11 and 12 and he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry so I think what we can see now is really two kinds of gifts that Paul is addressing in verse 7 we see that he gave each of us gifts Christ gave each of us gifts and we can call these gifts serving gifts and then when we come to verse 11 we see him giving these particular gifts the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and the teachers to equip the saints to equip

those who were given the serving gifts to do the work of ministry

I think it's important to grasp that that now mind you the equipping gifts in a sense they are serving as well because when they equip they are serving the people of God but he does make a distinction where in verse 7 he does not list the gifts he simply says God has given gifts and we can look to other parts of scripture to see where those gifts are and even there those gifts are not exhaustive the work of the spirit and the gifts of the spirit are very broad but they're all of the spirit and so you may look at for example 1 corinthians 12 or romans 12 you see a list of gifts!

[ 21 : 27 ] and I think those would be connected with what he says in verse 7 but in verse 11 he lists four particular these gifts a lot has been said about these gifts but I think for us this morning is sufficient just to say a few things first the word about apostles and prophets in Ephesians 2 19 and 20 Paul tells us that the household of God the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus himself being the cornerstone Paul also refers to the apostles and prophets again in chapter 3 in verses 5 and 7 where he says that God gave to them the revelation of the mystery that Jews and Gentiles will be united together in one body in one family they will be partakers of the promise in

Jesus Christ through the gospel now the nature of foundations is you lay them once you don't you don't have an ever expanding and being built upon foundation foundations are laid once and for all and so the apostles and prophets that Paul refers to in chapter 2 and in chapter 3 are a closed group they are dead we don't keep adding to them now there are those who believe that they continue to exist and how they figure that out is difficult to understand because it would mean that you're trying to build a house a house of a church but at the same time expanding the foundation and that just doesn't just does not doesn't happen the apostles and the prophets that Paul refers to in chapter 2 and chapter 3 is a closed group they don't exist today there's none like them today now having said that what then are we to make of what Paul says in verse 11 that Christ has given the apostles and the prophets now there are some who believe that the reference to apostles and prophets in verse 11 is the same reference to the apostles and prophets in chapters 2 and 3 and if that view is correct then what it means is that as it relates to the equipping of the saints today the only extent to which

God's people would benefit and be equipped from apostles and prophets is through their words that are recorded in scripture through the revelation that God gave to them that is recorded in scripture and that would mean that the only in person equipping that takes place today is through the evangelists and through the shepherds and teachers and notice that shepherd and teacher is really one and you know that and here's your other hint Andre when we're looking at these in verse 11 notice in verse 11 it says and he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers the reason we know that shepherds and teachers are one is there's only one definite article the word the is the definite article and it is the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and teachers one definite article for each one of those groups not the indefinite and but the definite the now

I don't think the view that the apostles and the prophets referred to in verse 11 are the same apostles and prophets referred to in chapters 2 and 3 and let me try to explain why I say that I think the first indication that Paul is dealing with different gifts is that in chapters 2 and 3 he refers to the apostles and prophets one definite article to refer to both of them and he does that in chapter 2 he does that in chapter 3 however when he comes to chapter 4 and verse 11 he refers to the apostles and the prophets he doesn't refer to them collectively he refers to them now individually they were collective in chapters 2 and 3 but now in chapter 4 he refers to them individually as the apostles and the prophets and so

[ 27 : 11 ] I think what can be said in light of that is while these individuals that Paul is referring to in chapter 4 verse 11 they don't have authority in their speech they don't they're not the same as the foundational revelational apostles that he talks about in chapters 2 and 3 but they would be people who have this kind of gifting a gifting Christ gives ministry abilities to pioneer works of um in virgin territory or to plan churches to strengthen churches and to ensure that churches are built soundly and on on sound doctrine that is more of an apostolic kind of ministry but not apostles in the sense of the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter and those as a matter of fact to be one of those apostles you have to have seen the

Lord and so I believe that Paul is addressing here something a gifting that is different from those particular gift offices that he refers to in chapters 2 and 3 and when you think of prophets prophets

today would be those who have a gift of prophecy those who share those thoughts that they believe God brings to mind and they use those thoughts to encourage and to build up the people of God and let me just help you to see why I say this in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 verses 29 to 32 here's what Paul writes he says let two or three prophets speak and let the others weigh what is said if a revelation is made to the other sitting there let the first be silent for you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and be encouraged and the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets clearly

Paul is not talking about foundational prophets here who would be apostles and prophets that he talked about in chapters 2 and 3 not talking about them and here's how we know the reason we know is that their words the words of these prophets that Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 14 their words are not infallible in terms of it being the very words of God because Paul says you're to judge their words he says you let two or three of them speak and let the rest judge to see whether what they're saying is worthy to be received or needs to be rejected and so what Paul has in mind here in 1 Corinthians 14 29 through 32 and look there are lots of them he says let up to three of them speak and then let the others who are sitting there judge and if something is revealed to another one well then you should stay silent and so clearly these are not foundational apostles prophets sorry these are

I believe those who would fit the description that he is referring to in verse 11 in that God has given where they are able to report to brothers and sisters what they believe God has brought to mind and they can miss it in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 Paul writes to the church and he says to them don't despise prophecy but prove all things prove it test it check to see whether it is sound and hold fast to what is good meaning not everything is good and this is all a part of church life this is all a part of building up the body of Christ and what is the goal of this kind of prophetic ministry that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 14 it's not revelational in terms of being a part of scripture he tells us in verse 3 of chapter 14 he says the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation that's the purpose of prophecy and so

God can and does give ministry to individuals where he uses them in communicating words to others that build them up that strengthen them that console them it's all a part of church life and God determines those individuals to whom he would give that gifting now when you read in first Corinthians 14 more broadly you'll see Paul expressing a desire that all of God's people would prophesy and so there is a gift of prophecy that is brought in the church but there also seems to be this gift of prophet where God would grant a measure of gifting to an individual to be able to equip in a broader way more than just the general gift of prophecy and so

[ 33 : 02 ] I believe that in verse 11 when Paul is talking about he gave the apostles and the prophets these are in different ways and separate from what he has already addressed in the earlier chapters and again I don't want to be misunderstood on this particular point the apostles and prophets that Paul addresses in chapters 2 and 3 they're all dead but what he addresses in chapter 11 my best understanding of that is that these are not the same and so they don't have a kind of authority in their speech but God uses them as a part of equipping the saints in the church now what can be said about evangelists like John Stott's definition he writes this he says it may refer to the gift of evangelistic preaching or of making the gospel particularly plain and relevant to unbelievers or helping or helping

Tamora's people to take the plunge of commitment to Christ or effective or of effective personal witnessing and Tamora's means someone who is a bit timid or fearful apprehensive lacking in confidence he's saying evangelists have a way of helping those kinds of people one to commit to Christ but also helping others equipping them that they would witness for Christ and they share their faith and then the last one the shepherd and teacher again one gift and this implies those who guard and care for the flock by protecting them and feeding them I think one helpful observation to see from verse 11 is that each of these gifts in one way or another is connected to instructing or teaching God's people each one of them has a teaching element in it the apostles and the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and the teachers they are equipping

God's people for gifts of sorry for for ministry and God's intent is that the equipping gifts will prepare the serving gifts for the works of ministry to edify the church and the works of ministry would speak to all of God's work all of God's people being engaged in all of God's work and God's work is a multifaceted work which is the work of the great commission the proclamation of the gospel the making of disciples the planting of churches the strengthening of churches and this is an ongoing

work and an ongoing cycle of activity unity and it is through this process that members of the church grow into this functional unity with these diverse gifts that God has given to them the equippers who God has given to the church they are to equip these individuals and so together they begin to function in a way that is helpful and beneficial to the church and part of that is learning to grow in appreciation for one another's gifts those who are gifted differently from the way we are the first point was a bit long the second and third are not as long that's the first aspect what he addresses in this passage the diversity of gifts the second is the unity of faith the unity of faith the result of the equipping gifts preparing the serving gifts of

God's people is to bring them into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God verse 12 says until we attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and here I don't believe that what Paul is saying is that the goal is that all groups of people all denominations will all believe the same thing I don't think he is saying that God's goal in giving these equippers is to bring all of the people of God everywhere into one single unity of faith I think it's best understood what he is saying in the local church context or certainly in a common group you can have a denomination where they all embrace the same thing for example we are part of sovereign grace churches and so we would have sameness of faith with other sovereign grace churches and general similarity with reformed churches in general but

I think Paul is addressing this more in the local setting that these equippers are bringing God's people to a shared unity of faith over time I think one thing should be obvious to all of us as we consider this and that is that teaching obviously cannot be ignored and this is why we see these gifts in an instructive kind of way they are teaching this is not generic teaching this is doctrinal teaching this is teaching the truths and the beliefs of the faith and it is impossible to teach doctrine without pointing out differences in beliefs there are differences and sometimes when you address these differences some measure of controversy can result and explains why some churches shy away from discussing doctrine because sometimes they do bring division because they bring to the surface that sometimes people in the same church can believe different things and so you have some churches that will just stay away from doctrine altogether and they just labor to keep everybody together with all the different views that they have never talking about doctrine and they have more of a show of unity than true unity and the basis of our unity is centered around the [ 40 : 15 ] Lord Jesus Christ and his person and his work that is what we are all centered around but this doesn't happen automatically this is to be very intentional and effort must be put forth to ensure that we are believing the same thing Paul in his letter to the church at Corinth as he opened that letter he said to them I appeal to you 1 Corinthians 1 and 10 I appeal to you brothers by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment and here I think as we consider how we might apply this I think it points to the importance of us taking very seriously on a personal level making every effort to ensure that we embrace opportunities when we are together because when we are together we open

God's word and we try to learn and grow together in terms of what we believe and what is central to our faith and so we want to embrace those opportunities times like this times like Bible study even prayer we open God's word during that time and in the process we are growing in our shared unity of the faith notice that the apostle Paul earlier in chapter 4 he was talking about the unity of the spirit and now he's talking about the unity of the faith and in truth we are better positioned to maintain the unity of the spirit when we have a unity of the faith well third and finally having addressed diversity of gifts and unity of faith

Paul addresses what is clearly the ultimate aim which is maturity in Christ he addresses this in verses 13 the end of verse 13 through verse 16 and the aim is that those with the equipping gifts referred to in verse 11 will prepare those with the serving gifts referred to in verse 7 with the goal being Christian maturity so that the people of God are stable and productive members of the church and notice that Paul uses several different words to refer to maturity he talks about mature manhood in verse 13 he also talks about the stature of the fullness of Christ in verse 13 in verse 14 he talks about no longer children and then in verse 15 that we would grow up in every way in verse 14 we see the risk of lacking spiritual maturity when we lack spiritual maturity we will be like the waves of the sea on a windy day just tossed to and fro

Paul is not Paul is using a vivid description to help us to see what a lack of spiritual maturity that is rooted in doctrine rooted in who Christ is and rooted in what his work has accomplished a lack of

that will produce instability in our lives it would be like the wind you know on a windy day the waves will be going in one direction and sometimes on that same day the wind changes direction the waves go in another direction and Paul says that's what it's like to lack spiritual maturity that's what it's like to lack the equipping and the preparing of coming into this unity of the faith that is centered on the Lord Jesus Christ his person and his work who he is and what he has done it is sobering to me as a pastor to read these words of the apostle Paul in verse 14 where he says he is warning he is he's saying that here's here's what happens those who lack spiritual maturity those who lack this doctrinal foundation that they should have they will be at the mercy of men who are engaged in human cunning and craftiness in deceitful schemes brothers and sisters that is sobering it is not enough to say that because somebody gets up in a pulpit and holds up a Bible or somebody goes by the name of pastor we can trust every single thing that comes out of their mouth Paul says some are involved in human cunning and craftiness in deceitful schemes and here's something I would say to us this morning here's a hint as to how you can get a sense as to whether you are spiritually mature and whether you are stable in the faith if you engage in social media if you watch so-called Christian television and you're able to say amen to much of that brother my sister that is a telltale sign that you have fallen prey to the slight and cunning craftiness and unsound doctrine that is pervading the internet and pervading much of [ 46 : 35 ] Christian television I'm not saying there's nothing good out there there are good things out there but what is good out there is far and few and far in between and we need discernment if we are amending all the things that people are posting and without thought just liking it and loving it and sharing it my friend it is a telltale sign that we are deficient in the very thing that the apostle Paul is addressing here and friends it is our spiritual life this is no game this is no this is not something that doesn't have consequences it has consequences we will be unstable we will be frivolous we will be at the mercy of heartless men who use God's word for their own selfish aims and so in this description that the apostle Paul gives us is a very sober warning that we all need to take heed to if we lack spiritual maturity we're being conned every single day in spiritual ways we're being swung in so many ways but there's a better alternative and Paul points to that better alternative in verses 15 and 16 he says we are to speak the truth in love and we are to grow up into Christ in every way this doesn't happen by osmosis this happens by effort this happens by being intentional to be in

God's word personally to be in God's word together so that we may grow up into Christ in every way speaking the truth and love notice the individual responsibility that we all have in verse 16 he says from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly making the body grow so that it builds itself up in love brothers and sisters every one of us who is a part of this local church has a vital part to play a vital role to play and Paul is saying that we will be at our best and growing into Christ likeness and growing into maturity when each of us is playing our part when each of us is effectively functioning the way that we are supposed to function and when I ask you what is your part what is the gift or what are the gifts that God has given to you for this body that you would supply that to cause this body to grow and mature in the

Lord Jesus Christ if when you consider that question your mind kind of goes blank and you're not so sure I encourage you to reach out to me I would love to come alongside you and help you to discover and recognize how the Lord may have gifted you to be a vital part of this body Paul uses two words five times in this letter of Ephesians it's the most he's used these two words in all of his letters and the two words are in love and if you notice he starts in verse 15 he says but rather speaking the truth in love and then he ends what he says in verse 16 with the words in love again that's the sandwich that's the basis upon which we are to function together in love and as I've said before love is better described than defined and we should always be refreshing in our minds this description of love the best description that we have is in 1 Corinthians 13 it reminds us of aspects of love that is so important when we are in a body when we have different gifts when we have different personalities and sometimes we sin against one another love covers a multitude of sin love does not keep a record of wrong love does not insist on its own way love is patient and kind and Paul says we are to do this work in love we are to speak the truth in love we are to build the body up in love this is the aim brothers and sisters this is the aim for all churches this is God's aim for our church that we would be united and we would be matured through diverse gifts that God has given to us and may this be increasingly true as the Lord gives us breath and life to be

together and to grow together as a local church let's pray oh father we thank you for your word lord I pray that you would use the gifts that you have given to us for the building up of this church that we might be mature and we might be stable and we might do the work that you have given to us to do together for the glory of your name it's in Christ's name we pray amen let's stand together for our closing song