

Ephesians 4:1-6

Context of Paul (v.1)

His affection for the Ephesians

His imprisonment – lack of freedom & friends

The Character of Christian Community (v.2)

Completely humble & gentle

Patient, bearing each other in love.

Acceptance despite differences & quirks

It also includes his weakness and oddities, which are such a trial to our patience, everything that produces frictions, conflicts, and collisions among us. To bear the burden of the other person means involvement with the created reality of the other, to accept and affirm it, and, in bearing with it, to break through to the point where we take joy in it. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Faith in the Transformation a Person by the Spirit.

To forgive them even when they hurt you.

The sin of the other person is harder to bear than their freedom. To cherish no contempt for the sinner but rather prize the privilege of bearing them means not to have to give them up as lost, to be able to accept them, to preserve fellowship with them through forgiveness. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Humility to know one's own frailty and biases

Community is formed not by the demonstrating of individual strengths
by the mutual sharing of weaknesses

What Unites (v.4-6)

What then draws us together as a community?

Relationships have several levels

Acquaintance/ Casual Friends

Companions with Shared Interests

Deep Friends – Grace & Truth

But what forms the Christian friendship?

You will become like your friends.

(Bad Company corrupts good character.)

One Spirit, One hope, One Lord, One Faith, One baptism, One God.

It is God.

God has so ordained things that we grow in faith only through the frailty of one another. - St. John of the Cross

It is our need for him.

Sharing

Let us celebrate our unity found in our frailty, our need for Christ.

And the simple reality that we are shaped by learning to live in community.