

THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH

(1 John 4:7-12)

As a boy with a great imagination I loved the story of the Three Musketeers. I would envision myself saying as they, "One for all and all for one." When you study your Bible you will discover that those words beautifully describe the local church. We should be "each for the other and all for the Lord."

We should be a worshipping, disciple making and loving church. The local church should never be a place of fighting, bitterness, division, and selfishness. God forgive us. It should be the sweetest place on the planet.

The Bible tells us that we are to "love one another." (John 13:34) This love is to be from the heart. (1 Peter 1:22)

Yet, this "love" is not just a feeling, it involves the tenderhearted caring of each other.

FOUR LOVING QUALITIES THAT NEED TO BE FOUND WITHIN OUR CHURCH

CAUSING GRACE TO BE BEAUTIFUL. Remember, the church is not a

professional association, a business, a civil club, nor a school. It is God's family bound together by love!

I. **We Are A Welcoming Church.**

You may not be welcomed in some places, but you are welcome here. In two ways:

A. Paul calls us as a church "to accept one another." (Romans 15:7)

1. Paul is teaching about the weaker brother issues. We must receive one another, even if we have differing convictions on those things.
2. Our area has many nationalities and races. I would love for us to have some from every one of these. It would be like a little heaven on earth.

B. Furthermore, Paul tells that at times we will need "to bear with one another." (Eph. 4:1-3)

1. In the church there are times when others may irritate us. All of us still have a sin nature and we need grace to continue to love even those who are unlovely.
2. This means each of us must not be brittle...where we easily break.
3. In love we remember that the Lord is still working on each of us, so we give grace to those in the church who "push our buttons."

II. **We Are A Kind-Tenderhearted Church. (Eph.4:32)**

A. After commanding us not to grieve the Holy Spirit, (Eph 4:30), Paul continues with a list of qualities that ought to be found in us. In verse 32, he tells that we are "to be kind and compassionate to one another."

1. Kindness is the expression of love to others. It involves what we say and what we do for those in the body of Christ. It is the essence of Jesus, who was all man, yet

