

Living in Harmony

Key Verse: *“The God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
—Romans 15:5,6

Selected Scripture:
Romans 14:1-13;
15:5,6

PAUL, IN WRITING TO THE brethren at Rome, recalled that evidently there were some disputes among those there about such things as what they should eat, what days should be considered holy, and the ensuing judgments which were being rendered one to another as a result of such disputes and disagreements. He warns the brethren that such disputes, and the improper judgments that came from them, were out of harmony with the Christian liberty in which they all now should be sharing. Concerning the matter of eating, he said, “One believeth that he may eat

all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.” (Rom. 14:2,3) Regarding the recognition of holy days, Paul further writes, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.”—vss. 5,6

Paul states that it is not what one eats or does not eat which determines faithfulness to their covenant, neither is the fact that some might think one day to be holier than another day of vital importance. One, in such a condition of mind, is in fact spending too much time thinking about himself and his own will, rather than God and his will. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (vss. 7,8) The lesson is quite clear. We do not belong to ourselves, and so our preferences along the lines of such relatively unimportant questions are best kept to ourselves, and certainly should never be used as a test of faith or fellowship among brethren.

Likewise, judgment of our brethren concerning matters such as previously mentioned should be put away from our thinking. Paul says, "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (vss. 10,13) Far more serious than any indiscretion as to what we eat, drink, or what days we particularly celebrate as holy, would be that any of us would say or do anything to stumble another brother in Christ by insisting on our preferences in these matters.

The Key Verses of our lesson focus on the proper attitude that we should have toward our brethren, and the loving and unified relationship we should enjoy one with another through Christ. We should be 'likeminded,' desiring the mind, or disposition, of Christ in ourselves, just as our brethren are striving for this same mind also. Having this mind we then can truly do as the Key Verse says, 'with one mind and one mouth [together] glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' ■