



## LANDER, WYOMING *church of Christ*

### When Christians Disagree

We are all different. We come from different social and educational backgrounds. We experience different issues in different ways, and at different stages in our Christian walks. Even the Bible explains that although we are one body, we have different functions (1 Corinthians 12). It therefore makes complete sense that we don't always see things the same way.

In Philippians 2:2, we are encouraged to be of the "same mind," but how can we do that when we are all different? The answer is that we are to be united in Christian fundamentals, while giving each other freedom in areas of opinion.

Ephesians 4:3-6 probably explains this best. The context is *"being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* Paul then continues to share some fundamentals: *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."*

This is "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." These are essentials.

But, what about areas of opinion – the grey areas where there is no clear command? Romans 14 addresses this pretty well. We cannot argue over "differences of opinion" (v1.) We need to be careful not to judge or make a law where God has made none. Verse 4 says, *"... Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."*

As Christians, we need to also ask: what is our overall goal? Is it not actually all about the Lord? (See Romans 14:5-8.) Is it not about loving and encouraging one another towards heaven? (See Romans 14:17.) This is where we should focus.

Christians disagree because we are fallible human beings. Even the great leaders like Paul and Barnabas parted ways over an opinion (Acts 15:39.) It seems Paul later regretted that decision. (See 2 Timothy 4:11.) Paul and Barnabas had been through so much together that I am sure they loved each other. Let us therefore love each other in spite of difference, and whether present or absent.

- Triston Jacobsohn, 2011