

## Let Them Be One!

### TODAY'S READING: JOHN 16 AND 17

After explaining the work of the Holy Spirit and reminding the disciples that their grief will turn into joy, Jesus then looked toward heaven and prayed for them (John 17:1). This was the last prayer that Jesus would share with his disciples before his arrest, so he emphasized his greatest concerns regarding the time when he would no longer be with them physically. In verses 20–24, he emphasizes the importance of the unity of believers: “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so **that the world may believe** that you have sent me.”

There are reportedly more than 40,000 denominations in the world today, and many people are critical of the Christian faith because of divisions among believers. God has created us in beautifully diverse ways, but it is not always easy to be united in diversity. It has been very encouraging to see churches come together across denominational lines and geographic boundaries during this pandemic, through joint prayer initiatives and collaborative approaches to reaching those in need. In this unity, the world can see the love of God revealed today.



### Happening Now:

Evangelical churches of diverse backgrounds in Italy have come together as never before in prayer and common concern for their suffering nation. The same can be said of a recent 12-hour online prayer initiative in New Zealand. The entire continent of Latin America had a joint day of prayer, and many more stories could be told of pastors, church leaders and individuals praying and working together in their neighborhoods, cities and nations.

### Have You Thought About...

- Jesus prayed for unity not just for unity's sake, but so that the world may see and believe in him. If unity is so important to help people find Christ, why do we find it so difficult sometimes to be united as followers of Jesus?
- What obstacles do you experience with regard to uniting with other believers? Are these essential matters for our faith, or are they related to differences in tradition or style of worship?
- How could your words and deeds today contribute to unity, starting in your own household?