

## INTERPRETATION

Given the context in which the Philippian church was living, why do you think Paul thought unity in the church was so important?

How does Paul relate the idea of unity with the ministry of Christ?

At the end of the passage Paul describes the outcome of the church living in unity. Why do think that Paul may consider that he had laboured “in vain” if the church does not live in unity.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Are you doing all that you can to maintain the unity of your church?

Do outsiders look at your church and see a people loving one another and surrendering to the needs of one another? How could that be improved?

*Unity and self-sacrifice for the good of others is based on a true understanding of who Christ is, and what he has done for us. When we see how he sacrificed himself for us we are encouraged to sacrifice ourselves for others.*



# A Short Study of PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11, 14-18

*In the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians, Paul encourages them to meditate on the example of Christ, to find encouragement there, and to live in unity and self-sacrifice for the sake of one another and for the testimony of the church.*

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## PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11, 14-18

- 1 *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,*
- 2 *complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*
- 3 *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*
- 4 *Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*
- 5 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,*
- 6 *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,*
- 7 *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
- 8 *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
- 9 *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,*
- 10 *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*
- 11 *and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- 14 *Do all things without grumbling or disputing,*
- 15 *that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*
- 16 *holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*

## OBSERVATION

In chapter one Paul had been praying that the Philippians would grow in love, knowledge and discernment, and so be filled with the “fruit of righteousness.” He also warned them that they may be called to suffer for Christ.

Mark the words ‘same’ and ‘mind.’

- What is Paul now encouraging the Philippians to do?

Mark the word ‘but.’ Paul uses the word ‘but’ to mark three contrasts; what are they?

How do the first two (things Paul is encouraging the Philippians to do) relate to the third (what Jesus did?)

Verses six to eleven are sometimes known as the Christ Hymn, describing Christ’s humiliation and subsequent exaltation. Note the steps from Christ’s being in the form of God to his death on the cross.

Mark the word ‘therefore.’ This links what God did next to the verses that came before.

- What did God do? And why did God do it?

Looking forward to the verses following:

- What are the two outcomes of God’s actions?
- What is the ultimate end of God’s exalting Christ?

Paul goes on to draw attention to another way in which unity can be maintained. What does he tell the Philippians about the way they should behave?