

DISCUSSION GUIDE

HANDLING DIFFERENCES IN CHURCH

Romans 14:1-15:12

Not Ashamed (Romans) — Week 39

ICEBREAKER: What invention would make your life easier?

OVERVIEW: In every church people have differences — disagreements about disputable matters. These are ethical questions that are not clearly answered in Scripture. These kinds of differences can cause division and destroy the work of God in the church. In this discussion we will go deeper with Paul's instructions about solving this challenge.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. What are some examples of "disputable matters" that Christians disagree about today? For example, Halloween and trick-or-treating.
3. Is church unity worth the effort? Explain.
4. Read Romans 14:1-2. Who are the "weak" in this section, and who are the "strong"?
5. Read Romans 14:1 and 15:7. These verses command the weak and strong to welcome (or "accept") one another. What does it mean for the weak and strong to accept each other in the church?

6. Read Romans 14:5. When Paul says, "Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind," he was saying that each person should focus on doing what they think pleases the Lord. How would it help the church to be more unified if each person made this a priority?
7. "Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rm 14:5) also points to the importance of following your conscience. What is the conscience, and what does the Bible say about it?
8. Should you try to push others to live according to your conscience on disputable matters? Explain.
9. When does an issue become "a matter of conscience"?
10. Read Romans 14:13-20. In this passage Paul exhorts the strong to not be a stumbling block. What does it mean to be a stumbling block, and how can you avoid it?
11. Read Romans 15:1-3. Does this passage say you need to be a "people pleaser"? If not, what is it saying?

The Last Word: "Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other, which will bring glory to God." Rm 15:7, NCV

