

December 5, 2021

**Harmony**  
**Romans 15:4-13**

*“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.” Romans 15:5*

The past fifteen months have been filled with concerns and disappointments. We have each had our heartaches and struggles. Last Christmas was particularly hard as we had to let go of many of our annual traditions. For some, exchanging gifts was done in an empty parking lot instead of around a Christmas tree.

Christmas shopping trips with friends was replaced by ordering online. The normal baking of Christmas cookies with children and grandchildren was done alone. Our elderly became more and more isolated. We were unable to worship together but instead viewed our advent services on Facebook or YouTube.

We missed singing Christmas carols and praying with each other. It became easy to think only in terms of what we wanted. It was hard to think of ourselves as a united body when we were so alone.

Winter, with its sadness, was followed by one of the most beautiful springs I remember. Jonquils, crocus, tulips, and daffodils sprung up everywhere in amazing abundance. It appeared as a gift from God, giving us hope. It wasn't the individual flowers that were so inspiring, but the glory of all of them blooming together.

As Christians we are as individual as the flowers of spring. We each bring gifts to the Lord in our own way, and sometimes in not getting our way. In harmony we share God's love in greater abundance.

The pandemic and economic repercussions are going to change our lives for many years to come. Our church is going to change, and the needs are going to be great. We need to make certain as Christians we meet the needs of many and not just our individual needs. Paul in Romans tells all to live in harmony, one with another. As harmony in a song makes it sound richer, we too will be richer for developing harmony in our Christian lives.

At the writing of this devotional we are unaware of what Christmas 2021 will look like. What we do know is we will be celebrating God's greatest gift of all – His Son. The gift he gave in love to all of us, asking we share in harmony with all the world.

***Prayer:** Dear Lord, we're in a really tough place right now. We've developed our individual strengths in order to survive. Now Lord, to glorify you and to celebrate Christ's birth, we need to work in harmony with others. Please, guide us along the right path that all may know your love. Amen.*

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