

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

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Showing Honor To One Another

by Dan Trygg

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; outdo one another in showing honor...”

Romans 12:10

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself...”

Philippians 2:3

“Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor is due.”

Romans 13:7

“Live as free-ones, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”

I Peter 2:16,17

“Likewise, husbands, living-together-with the woman according to knowledge as with a less-powerful vessel, be showing (lit., ‘paying’) her honor as also co-heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

I Peter 3:7

“They also honored us with many marks of respect; and... they supplied us with all we needed.”

Acts 28:10

We have been looking at some of the “one-another” activities that the NT says we are to do to serve each other in the Body of Christ. There are over 21 different positive actions that are mentioned. **This is an indication of how interactive the gatherings of the saints were. Everyone was encouraged to come with something to share:** a song, a teaching, a revelation, etc. In addition to instruction in the teachings of the apostles, **there was unhurried time to share needs and blessings, struggles and victories** (Acts 2:42-47). Believers were encouraged to “consider one another” or “think about one another” for the purpose of encouraging and helping one another (Heb. 10:24). **In order for interactive sharing and ministry to happen effectively people had to learn how to treat each other with love and respect.** They needed to learn to listen, and encourage communication by truly seeking to understand. They needed to refrain from cutting someone off who was saying something that they didn’t fully agree with. It is important to allow someone to finish their whole thought, without interruption. There are skills we can learn that will enable us to affirm the person, even while supplementing, ...or even correcting..., some of what they may have said, ...but that usually comes *after* allowing them to unburden their heart. Strong emotion will often drive people to say unbalanced things (Job 6:25,26). We are there to minister to the hurting *person*, not edit their theology. Interactive communication can be a messy, complicated thing, at times. **The only way to get to community is to talk, listen, respect, love and serve each other enough to where we can find common ground and know that we can speak freely without fear of reprisal.** Thus, we have talked already about how we are to consistently apply our wills toward the well-being of one another (Spirit-led *agapē*-love), and express the tender affection of brotherly-love (*philadelphia*) toward one another. We are to create an atmosphere where people feel safe, loved and appreciated. Again, the word for “one-another” (*allēlōn*) is a reciprocal pronoun in Greek, which means that the action goes both ways. Love and respect are to flow from you to me, *and* from me to you. Oftentimes, when I am not feeling particularly loved, I may withhold myself from those around me. I must remember that God is my source, not these other people. *I* can still be kind and warm, even if *they* are not.

Today, we are going to examine another of these “one-another” expressions that help to create and support the healthy Body-life that God desires the church community to become. We are to “outdo one another in showing honor” (ESV), or “give preference to one another in honor” (NASB). That little distinction between versions indicates that there is probably something here that is not easily transferable into English. More on that later. Before we go there, we should ask, “**What is ‘honor’?**” We often use a term like this, but never really stop to weigh it out and examine carefully what it means. **In NT Greek, the noun form was *timē*, and the verbal form was *timaō*.** The word was used in three main ways. (1.) ***Timē* was initially used for the “value, worth or price” set for something.** For example, this word is used of the 30 pieces of silver as the “price” Judas agreed to betray Jesus to the chief priests (Matt. 27:6,9). It was used for the “proceeds” of the money gained by those who sold their goods and property in the early Jerusalem church, when they sold their possessions to give to the poor. They brought the “price” they obtained in the sale, and laid it at the apostles’ feet for distribution to those in need (Acts 4:34,35). It was from this “price” that Ananias and Sapphira chose to keep back a portion for themselves, ...and yet *tell everyone* they were giving the *whole* amount! The money was theirs to do with what they wanted, but they “lied to the Holy Spirit” by claiming to have brought the whole “price” to the apostles, in order to appear to be more generous than they actually were (Acts 5:1-4). It was also the valuation or “sum of money” that Abraham paid for a place to bury his dead (Acts 7:16). Again, in Acts 19:19 this same word is used to refer to the “value” of the occultic books and paraphernalia burned at Ephesus by the new converts who had left their black arts to follow Christ. Paul uses the same term in

reference to the cost of our salvation, and what it means, “you were bought with a *price*”, therefore we are to “glorify God in our bodies” and we are also told to *not* sell ourselves to “become slaves of men” (I Cor. 6:20; 7:23). **(2.) *Timaō* was also used in relationships, to indicate “value, worth, respect, esteem or honor”.** We are told to “honor your father and mother” (Matt. 15:4; 19:19; Mk. 7:10; 10:19; Lk. 18:20; Eph. 6:2); “honor widows, who are true widows” (I Tim. 5:3); “honor the king” (I Pet. 2:17). We are also to show double honor to elders who “stand before us well, especially those who labor in the Word and in teaching” (I Tim. 5:17), and we are to honor women as “joint-heirs of the grace of life” (I Pet. 3:7). We are to show honor to all people, especially working diligently to esteem one another (I Pet. 2:17; Rom. 12:10). **(3.) A derivative, *epitimaō*, means to “rebuke, admonish, restrain, or sharply charge someone”.** Interestingly, this word also meant to “show honor” in ancient Greek, but it also meant to “raise the price of something; to adjudicate, or to assess a price or penalty for something”. Over time, this latter idea became predominant, and the word came to refer more to “a warning, or penalty for bad behavior” than a positive word. In an interesting parallel to these Greek words, the words, “price, prize, precious, and praise” all come from the same French root word into English. Again, you can see the relationship between “value, worth” and the monetary “setting of a price”, as well as the more internal feelings of something being “prized, precious or even worthy-of-praise”.

To “honor” someone, then, is to show that you value, respect, and esteem them. It is to demonstrate that they have worth in your eyes. **Note that this is *more than just a mental perspective, or an emotional feeling.* This is communicated by outwardly expressed actions.** Obviously, it *starts* in the mind or heart. You have feelings of respect for someone, or you inwardly see that others are important. You may even come to where you may “feel” or “think” that others are more important than you are, as the passage in Philippians says. **Until it translates into *action*, however, it is not *real*.** Jesus doesn’t want Walter Mitty disciples, ...followers who perform great acts of service and show outstanding Christian love *only in their own minds!* No. Our love, ...our obedience to Him and service to others..., is to be expressed and demonstrated *outwardly*. **We are to show honor to one another.** If we never express the value or esteem we feel, how will the other person benefit from our inner respect? How will they be encouraged, or built up? **Remember, when we come together, all things are to be done for edification, to build up one another** (I Cor. 14:26). **Showing honor to one another is one of those edifying actions.** To be treated well, to be told that you are appreciated, makes you feel good inside. There is another benefit, as well. When you show honor to someone *else*, and you can *see* the encouragement it brings *them*, that makes *you*, the giver, feel good, too! Did not God say, “If you do *well*, will not *your* countenance be lifted up?” and Jesus said, “It is *more blessed* to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). In the passages at the top of this study honor is something expressed: **We are to show honor , render honor, and even to pay honor.** It is clear that Paul and his companions knew they were valued and esteemed by the people of Malta by the “many marks of respect” and the way they generously hosted them.

OK. I alluded to the fact that there may be a little interesting tidbit in Romans 12:10. Often, when you see divergent translations in different English versions, it may indicate that the original language offers more than the English translators can simply put into one phrase. In Romans 12, the two options are “outdo one another in showing honor” (ESV, RSV), or “give preference to one another in honor” (NASB, KJV). So, which is more accurate? Ready for this? The Greek actually says, “leading in honor one another”. The word translated as “leading” is a compound word from the word to “lead, plan or consider” and the prefix that means “before”, ...either in reference to others , or in reference to time. So, it could mean we are to be “going ahead in honor”, which sounds like the ESV, RSV translation; or it could mean we are “considering one another before in honor”, which sounds like the NASB, KJV translation; or it could also mean we are to be “planning ahead to honor one another”, which is not reflected in either translations, but it is a viable alternative. See what translators have to deal with? The Greek makes you think about the words, and toy with the alternatives, because they are *all* carried within the original words. In English, the translator has to make a choice. What seems to fit best? **Let’s try to make this practical. First of all, we could be the leader in showing honor.** This is a good thing. We are to do our part to encourage others. Why not accept this challenge? Outdo one another? That sounds too much like competition. But *taking initiative to “show honor”* is a good practical message we can all benefit from. **Secondly, let’s consider one another for the purpose of honoring each other.** We like to blow by that pretty quick. Some people are very thoughtful (full-of-thought) with regard to deliberate actions they take in order to bless and encourage other people. Paul may be encouraging us to slow down and spend a little time thinking about one another, and considering special ways we could show honor to one another. **Third, we could plan ahead to do things that would show people that they are special and important to us.** This is where *the initiative* and *the deliberation* can effectively turn into *action*. Many actions we can do for one another are off-the-cuff and spontaneous. Sometimes we may be inspired to do something to show someone they are special, but it would mean going out of our way to do it. Planning ahead can be the difference between a great idea, and bringing that idea into reality. **So, seize the opportunities to bless others; be thought-full; and plan to show honor.**