

# SIDE BY SIDE

**Read:** Philippians 4: 2-9 (and find Ephesians 4:32 & 1Corinthians 5:17 for later on)

## **Summary:**

During a hard time for the Philippian church, Paul writes with a message about unity and visibility. 'Side-by-side' is the phrase Paul uses to describe his work with others in the church. If we are working side-by-side with each other then there's no limit to how many people can join in, and everyone will be facing in the same direction. Paul gives some instruction in this passage to stop the church from facing away from each other or facing inward and excluding others.

### **1) Working Side-by-Side (v2-3)**

Paul encourages two arguing women in the church to 'agree *in the Lord*'. We can also react in challenging, counter-intuitive ways when we are motivated by how Jesus has reacted and acted towards us, and by being transformed by His Spirit to be more and more like Him.

(Read Eph 4:32 & 1Cor 5:17)

#### *Application for The Crown*

We are building a diverse church. As people from different cultural backgrounds work closely side-by-side, it is even more important for us to look out for tensions and misunderstandings and deal with them quickly and biblically. We are new creations with a new culture, together on a mission.

### **2) Engaging Positively With Culture (v4-8)**

Being new creations with a new culture will make us stick out wherever we are. Paul is keen that the Philippian church don't hide themselves away from the world in response to persecution, but instead respond with visible joy ('rejoice always') and a refusal to retaliate ('reasonableness')

We must not be anxious or stressed but instead pray with thanksgiving, as a result God will guard us and give us inexplicable peace even in the hardest times.

v8 clearly tells us that there is truth, beauty and good in all places. It is our role to support and affirm these things in our culture and then influence positive change.

v9 encourages us to remain grounded on God's Word and in His Spirit, and to take action!

God's promise is that as we take steps of faith, He will be with us.

## **Memory Joggers:**

*"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Jesus, Luke 23:34)*

*"We must be known, and known to be different"*

*"Being anxious is one of our most persistent and hidden sins; but the Spirit can change this"*

*"Thanksgiving stops our prayer times from being extended times of uninterrupted moaning"*

*"Thanking God first in prayer increases our humility and our faith."*

*"As we take courageous steps forward together, God will be with us as the big Number 8!"*

## **Application:**

Please select from the following questions. Encourage all to take part and to be honest. It is good to pray for each other during the meeting.

1. What did God say to you on Sunday and what are you going to do as a result?
2. Are you facing forward, inward or in different directions as a cell?
3. Do you reacted and act in a God-like way? Give some specific examples.
4. Have you been anxious about anything recently?
5. How do you deal with conflict within relationships?

6. How can you positively influence culture, individually or as a cell?
7. In response to what comes up, pray for each other that the Spirit will continue to do His transforming work.