

avoided the Gentiles, whom they considered to be unclean. And Gentiles hadn't been too crazy about socialising with those Jewish 'legalists' either.

The apostle Paul led the way in breaking down that attitude. One reason Christ came, he taught, was to unite believing Jews and Gentiles within one body. And it wasn't just a move to get votes. It was God's way of assuring that the whole world would hear the message of the gospel. No one would be left out.

The teaching that we needed to receive each other turned off many first-century Jews. They had distorted God's guidelines for holiness, turning their heritage into an excuse for ??arrogance.

Some churches and Christian groups actually appear to be more exclusive than inclusive. Only their kind of person would feel welcome. Even though God's people are all different and have different preferences for externals, we should all make the effort to accept one another.

Take an honest look at yourself. Do you love and accept other Christians, regardless of gender, age, race, nationality, income level, or education?

Before our churches become inclusive, our hearts have to be inclusive. When we start living out the gospel in that manner, the real celebration begins!

REFLECTION

- How well do I receive others?
- Do I show my acceptance by going and welcoming them, chatting with them, and helping them?
- How am I going to trust God to change me?



**The gospel
marginalises no one
and includes everyone.**



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Central Mountains Baptist Church

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Inclusiveness

(Romans 15:7) "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

If you listen to political candidates, you hear the concept of inclusiveness a lot. And, as with most political ideas, you might have zero clues as to what it means.

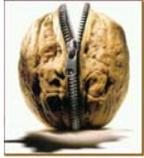
Inclusiveness is a buzz word. Both sides of the house present themselves as truly inclusive, welcoming anyone. Each party tends to present itself as the "party of **all** the people."

Inclusiveness sounds great. But in politics it comes off as just another way to get votes.

Do you want to see true inclusiveness? Check out Jesus Christ's church.

The early church presented a radical concept of inclusiveness. Jewish believers had





Romans: Truth in a Nutshell

(unzipped for you)

Accepting Differences II

In Romans 14:1-15:7 Paul gives us 6 instructions to maintain harmony when there is a difference of opinion amongst Christians. [from last time]

1. Receive others,
 2. Don't criticise others,
 3. Please the Lord,
- Today the last three:



4. Give up your _____, 14:13-16, 20-5:1, 4:17

Exercise of _____ by the strong can:

- #1 Be a _____ to the weak, 14:13
- #2 Be a _____ to the weak, 14:15a
- #3 _____ the weak, 14:15b
- #4 _____ the weak, 14:20-21
- #5 Make the weak even _____, 14:21
- #6 Cause the weak to _____, 14:23



5. _____ Others, 14:17-19, 15:2-4

(1 Timothy 2:8-10) "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; {9} in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, {10} but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."



6. Seek _____, 15:5-6

