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I recently had the privilege of joining the FEBC directors for their winter meeting. They meet live twice per year and by video between the two live meetings. Naturally, the live meetings are a highlight, when the men can see one another face-to-face and work through the business of our Fellowship together. They are also a highlight because they provide the opportunity to connect personally, share stories, to laugh and cry and pray together.

Like most leadership boards, the directors face some difficult issues. While quite rare, there are spirited debates and passionate discussions. But without fail, there is a true sense of camaraderie, and beyond that, these men love each other. When business has ended, there is an easy sense of togetherness, and mutual respect is obvious. It is a joy to witness and to be part of such a Christlike gathering.

I hope your local church leaders operate this way. I hope your staff and elders and worship team and Sunday School team and men's or women's ministry team exhibit love and compassion toward one another even when there are disagreements about the best way forward.

More than ever before in my lifetime, these traits are uncommon in society. It seems nearly impossible to find secular examples of people who disagree and yet work together in a healthy way. In fact, many seem unwilling to even be near people with whom they disagree. It seems that anyone who does not share one's ideas must be labeled an enemy.

Perhaps that's why Jesus said: *"By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:5, ESV). Truly loving one another despite our differences is exactly what sets us apart. Fighting over our preferences is not supposed to be normal for believers. Leaving the church when things are not done our way is not supposed to be normal for believers. Nor is holding a grudge against someone in the church. Our love for one another is what will draw others to the work Christ is doing in us.

May we be churches that put our mutual love and concern on display for the community to see. May we be totally unlike the countless examples of selfishness in society. Let us love one another in humility and selflessness.

Thank you for your ongoing prayer, support, and encouragement.

Kevin Stone – President
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