



*Sandy Wild*

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*BIBLE READING: John 17:20-23*

Jesus concluded his final discipleship lesson with prayer. It has been said that we can learn a great deal about someone by listening to them pray. What was on the Master's heart as he prepared to go to the cross? From John 17, we read of Jesus' great love for his Father and how he yearns to return to him.

Likewise, Jesus loves the church and longs for us to experience the same intimacy he shares with the Father. But Jesus didn't stop there; we also discover his desire to see the church live as one. In the same way he and the Father have lived in community, Jesus asked for God's enablement that we might be one. For me, unity in the church is an important part of the Easter message.

Though I was raised in a Christian church, I did not have a relationship with Christ. I genuinely believed he was God's son, but I did not know him personally. It wasn't until 1977 when we were invited to a local Friends church for Easter that I discovered I was missing something: intimacy with God. Out of my personal relationship with Christ, I soon developed relationships with other believers lasting over 38 years. Together we have lived as one. These relationships have endured the challenges of physical separation, cultural and theological differences, even painful offense.

Yet because of Easter, we have the power to break through the walls that divide the church, walls that keep us from enjoying fellowship and strength offered through intimacy with one another.

*SONG: We Are One in the Bond of Love*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father, show me where I have erected walls that keep me separated from fellow believers.*

—Sandy Wild