

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Romans 15:5-6



SATURDAY, APRIL 1

My smart, agnostic, twenty-something son does not want to engage me in conversation about religious values, but he will discuss at length one thing he is very interested in – brain science. I’ve been reading up on the subject and been delighted to discover how much our Christian values of loving and serving others are reflected in studies of how human brains function best across groups.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he prays to God that the strong and the weak be given the steadfastness and encouragement to live together in harmony with one another. He asks Jesus’ followers to serve others over themselves, to build up others instead of themselves, to glorify God with one voice.

Scientific studies on the unconscious part of our human brain show how much we identify ourselves by group membership – woman, white, mother, Christian – and we unconsciously discriminate against others. Only when different groups work together for a common purpose to overcome common difficulties, does discrimination cease.

Please God, grant us humans the endurance to work with you in common purpose, using the best of our science and religious understanding, to create abundant lives for all groups.

—Neysa Ellgren