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# PM: Hold dear to noble values that bind us

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## Religious difference is no barrier in country being united

**PETALING JAYA:** The people should hold dear to the noble values that bind them together, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said everyone should reflect on the values of mutual respect, tolerance and helping the less fortunate this Christmas.

These are universal values which are espoused by Christianity as well as other religions, he said.

"These are the values that bind us in this diverse and vibrant land of ours," Najib said in his Christmas message.

He added that such values were cherished by all faiths.

MIC president Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said Christmas was a time for Malaysians to come together in the spirit of long-cherished racial unity and religious understanding.

It was a chance for Malaysians to host or attend open house, a Malaysian way of celebrating religious festivals, he added.

"Let this be another occasion for all Malaysians to come together and put aside their religious and racial identities," he said.

Dr Subramaniam, who is Health Minister, advised people to eat in moderation during festivals to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

"Let's focus on our health by eating healthy food and eating moderately as we celebrate Christmas and New Year," *Bernama* quoted him as saying.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong urged Malaysians to share the message of love, laughter and goodwill.

"In this Christmas, we must open ourselves to embrace common humanity, compassion and tolerance for the building of a united, strong and harmonious Malaysian society," he said.

Mah said 2016 was a challenging but fruitful year and urged Malaysians to take the remaining days of the year to express grati-

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tude, reflect introspectively and welcome the New Year with "renewed zest and vigour".

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Said Keruak said that in the Sabah context, Christmas was all the more significant among people of various races and religions.

"Religious difference is no barrier to visiting one another, and sitting and eating at the same table in an atmosphere of goodwill.

"This is the symbol of the uniqueness of our society in diversity, a symbol of unity. That's the beauty we have in Sabah," he said.

Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry president Tan Sri K. Kenneth Eswaran said the festive season should be considered a celebration for all Malaysians instead of just the Christian community.

He said unity among the people, which has been preserved for decades, ought to be shown in the celebration.

"We hope everyone benefits from a healthy and friendly socio-economic environment that will strengthen the ties among us," he said.