

The Body of Christ Series

Lesson Two: Living as Members

Biblical Text(s): Matthew 28:16-20; I Corinthians 12:13; I Corinthians 13:1-13;
I Corinthians 12:15-27; Romans 12: 3-8

Introduction

In last week's lesson, the main teaching points were "Why is the body essential and what is the 'Head'" and "How is the body structured"? You also were left with some ideas to ponder or homework for the week. One of the questions was, "How does being part of Christ's Body give you purpose"? This lesson will give us some more ideas about that purpose.

There are two key teaching points we will cover in today's lesson:

- Describe/Define what it means to be a member of the 'Body of Christ'
- Understand/Identify how I fit in the "Body of Christ."

Key Teaching Point #1: Describe/Define what it means to be a member of the 'Body of Christ'

The last thing Jesus said to his disciples was:

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28)

Paul reminds the congregation of Corinth of this:

13 For we were all baptized by[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. (I Corinthians 12)

Read the following scripture:

1 If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13)

We often think of these verses in context with wedding vows, but Paul is writing to a congregation that is struggling in part because they do not understand what membership in the body means.

Suggested Discussion Question:

- We often talk about baptism as a step to salvation.
- What does it mean for 'membership' in the body of Christ?

Key Teaching Point #2: Understand/Identify how I fit in the "Body of Christ."

Read the following scripture:

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[d]? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. (1 Corinthians 12)

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And/or

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12)

Suggested Discussion Question (this might be dangerous):

- How do you know your 'part'?
- Who doesn't know their part?

Questions:

How do people know their part? suggested readings

- Acts 16--why does Paul take Timothy?
- Titus 2--Older women mentoring the young
- Ephesians 6--Being good husband, wives and parents
- How did you discover your part?

Conclusion

Being part of the body is much more than membership in an organization, it is having a role in an organism. Think of what your body would be like without a pancreas. It is an organ we never see. It is small. There is a good chance you don't even know what it does. But without it your body fails to function. Your role in the body is just as important.

Homework:

If you don't know your part, try taking a spiritual gifts assessment. Then, take some time to discuss your results with someone you trust.

<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>

