

# The Body of Christ Series

## Lesson Six: Community in The Body of Christ

**Biblical Text(s):** 1 Peter 4:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:13-19

*“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:8-10)*

### Introduction

As we continue our study, this lesson focuses on the community in the Body of Christ and fundamentally how the Church should leave the building. You will learn “fellowship” and “hospitality” within our service of connecting with others includes, both an assembly at the time of worship but also a time for us to leave the building and serve others. This is truly how we build and develop our community of the Body of Christ.

**There are three key teaching points we will cover in today’s lesson:**

1. To understand the “Body of Christ” is an active “full community of believers” doing the Lord’s work.
2. To appreciate the importance of serving others and using our gifts to share Christ’s love!
3. To broaden our vision of how we practice hospitality by using our gifts to serve others (The Church has left the Building)..

### **Teaching Point 1: To understand the “Body of Christ” is an active “full community of believers” doing the Lord’s work.**

Understanding the importance of “Community” goes beyond the assembly and occasional gatherings of God’s people. It extends to a “presence” of being there when and as needed. It requires a “seeking out” to be the eyes, ears, feet and hands of the Lord.

As discussed in [Lesson 4](#) - Every member of the “Body” is important.

We are all part of the community of believers! It is not possible for the church to become all it is capable of becoming unless every member contributes their gifts to the growth and wellbeing of the Body of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 12** <sup>14</sup>Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>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? <sup>18</sup>But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

We are more than one person in Christ - we are part of something bigger and much more special. Through our works of service we build up the Body of Christ (Eph 4:12)

As you begin to reflect on this lesson it is important to understand that “Community in the Body of Christ” means more than attendance. It truly means using your gifts to serve others! We are part of a very active and

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vibrant community of believers who are constantly seeking to do the Lord's will. And, His will is for us to serve others, as faithful stewards of His grace in its various forms!

**Teaching Point 2 & 3: To appreciate the importance of serving others and using our gifts to share Christ's love! and To broaden our vision of how we practice hospitality by using our gifts to serve others (The Church has left the Building).**

This lesson touches on the importance of serving others through our connectivity of fellowship and hospitality. Central to this lesson is considering how we serve others beyond the fellowship of believers by reaching out to those who need the love of Christ inside and outside our spiritual family.

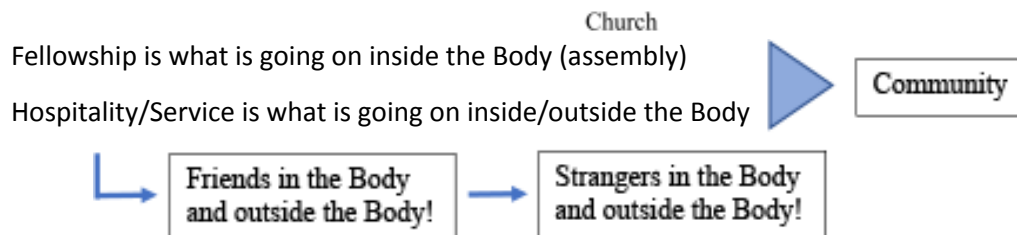
As we study the topic of "fellowship" and "hospitality" this is a great time to stress the importance that our community includes being together in worship but also leaving the physical setting and connecting with each other beyond the physical building. Most opportunities of "fellowship" and "hospitality" occur by the church (Body of Christ) reaching out to others. This is a great place to stress this in your teaching comments and points.

## Key Definitions:

A modern definition of "Hospitality": the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. (dictionary.com)

The Greek definition is the word Philoxenia, literally translated as a "friend to a stranger," and is widely perceived to be synonymous to hospitality. For Greeks it is much deeper than that. It is an unspoken cultural law that shows generosity and courtesy to strangers. (the greekreporter.com)

Community within The Body of Christ includes the "presence" of fellowship inside the Body and also the "presence" of hospitality both inside and outside the Body (illustrated below):



## Hospitality in Action:

As we consider the role and purpose of service and being hospitable to others it is interesting that the word "hospital" is included in the word hospitality. Being hospitable to others actually provides a healing effect.

*How does that add meaning and purpose to being hospitable?*

Being a servant and demonstrating hospitality is the glue that joins us together as a community. It is something that requires thinking of others before you consider yourself.

Wow, what a change in our perspective when we become part of God's Body.

Jesus is the model of service and hospitality. He related to both small and large groups. He had compassion on those in need and constantly looked for ways to share the message of His Father. People were attracted to Him – they sought him out!

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## Lesson Recommendation:

For this lesson it is recommended to include time to discuss different aspects and ideas concerning the practice of serving others with a focus on “hospitality”.

The pandemic has resulted in many people feeling limited in their ability to practice hospitality and serve others. This part of the discussion can be used to generate ideas for how each of us can be more hospitable, regardless of our circumstances...not limited to just having people over.

## **Suggested Discussion Questions:**

- What does it mean to serve?
- Is our view of what it means to be hospitable too limited?
- What are the requirements to be hospitable?
  - Kindness
  - Non-judgmental
  - Willingness
  - Sacrificial
  - Loving
  - Welcoming
  - Etc.
- What are some personal examples of “hospitality” you have experienced (been a part of), either in the giving or receiving.
- How does having different gifts allow “offering hospitality” to flourish?
  - What if you don’t have the gift of hospitality?
- Are we required to practice hospitality beyond an occasional greeting?

## Concluding Thoughts and scriptures to consider:

***<sup>2</sup> Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)***

- Where should we focus our hospitality? On other members of the body? On those outside the body?

***<sup>11</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup> Greet one another with a holy kiss. <sup>13</sup> All God’s people here send their greetings. <sup>14</sup> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13: 11-14)***

Community in the Body of Christ does indeed include “Fellowship” and a bonding of peace by encouraging one another and being in “presence” with each other.

As noted in Acts 2:42: ***They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.***

Having fellowship with each other and showing hospitality are both essential to spiritual growth and a healthy Body!

## **Is there a difference between fellowship and hospitality?**

- Fellowship – developing connections between members
- Hospitality – developing connections with outsiders/strangers

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How does this distinction motivate renewed thinking about your involvement in either or both?

COVID has shuffled a lot of people. Old relationships have been disrupted. New opportunities for relationships have been created.

***Through our hospitality, strangers become acquaintances, and acquaintances become friends.***

**We are blessed to be on the journey together and serve each other with the Love of Christ!**