

In verse 28 Paul lists many of the gifts and abilities vital to a dynamic church body. But he states that not everyone is included in this list, nor do they need to be.

28 Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. - 1 Corinthians 12:28 NLT

Your gifts or talents may or may not be on this list, but do you know what they are? Share what gifts and talents you feel God has specifically given to you. If you are unsure, ask your group what they see in you.

26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. - 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 NLT

Do you feel you have found your place in the body of Christ? If not, you can pray for an opportunity and inquire at the church office or connection counters. You will also have an opportunity at the Fully Alive Crew Rally on Sept 15th after services to find out more about how to be a part of the body of Christ at New Life. We need you for the body to function the way God intended it to.

WRAP-UP

It's easy to believe that the most important people in the church are those we see up on stage. But God put every one of us together with the right mix of gifts and talents to make this body function at its best. We need to stop comparing ourselves to one another and seek to do our part in the best possible way so that Christ's body will be at its best and God's mission in this world will be accomplished.

MEMORY VERSE

27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. - 1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT

Challenge- Write a thank you note to someone who is seldom recognized. Consider one of these- parking attendant, Sunday School teacher, the one who replenishes cards, tissues and pencils in the Worship Center, one who runs the cameras for the livestream or maybe one God puts on your heart.

One Body- Many Parts No Longer Strangers - Week 3

INTRODUCTION

Last week we leaned into the imagery of scripture...The Church as Family. This week we will lean into the imagery of scripture...the church is a body. Each image has unique implications as to how we relate to one another. No doubt Paul recognized the inherent problems that arise when people from different backgrounds and cultures are brought together for one purpose. God sees us as one body yet recognizes many parts. In fact, He intends for every one of us to use our unique gifts to contribute to the mission of Jesus, our head. How will we deal with the challenges that arise when asked to work alongside people who are different from us? Paul has the answer.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever been restricted from using a part of your body- for instance, have you had a broken bone, or been immobilized following surgery? How difficult was it to compensate for the loss?

Key Passage

27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. - 1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Many Parts- One Whole

3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. 5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all. - Ephesians 4:3-6 NLT

The Church is not a building, but the living, breathing people who gathered together to worship God. And those people who gather make up one “body”, the Body of Christ. But they certainly do not all look the same, act the same or have the same gifting.

What do these people all have in common according to Ephesians 4:3-6?

12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NLT

18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. - Colossians 1:18 NLT

In 1 Cor 12 Paul contrasts Jew with Gentile and slave with free. What are some of the contrasts you find in the church today?

Christ is the head over His body the church. What are some ways that the head relates to the body that parallel how Jesus relates to the church?

We recently baptized many people who made a public statement that they are dying to their old self and living as a new creation in Jesus. All of us who share in this “new life” are members of Christ’s body. We may look different on the outside, but inside we are all filled with God’s Holy Spirit.

2. Dealing with Differences

The tendency to compare ourselves with others is natural, but in an era of extensive social media platforms, it has become a trap that can lead us to unhealthy behavior.

15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? ...21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."

- 1 Corinthians 12:15-17, 21 NLT

In the verses above, Paul first uses the example of the foot comparing itself to the hand and the ear to the eye. Both come to the same conclusion – “I am less a part of the body because I am not like the other part that’s getting more honor than me.” He then addresses the attitude of the eye and the head telling others, “I don’t need you”.

What positions do you think get more honor or recognition in the church today? What are some of the emotions that can arise from comparisons between those less honored, and those more honored? How would that affect the way the ones with less honor would participate or interact at church?

If you are a nursery worker changing diapers, you may not feel as important as the worship leaders or pastors on the stage. But consider what would be lost if you were not there. Young parents wouldn’t be able to attend services, and little children would miss God’s loving touch through your hands. God knows what’s needed for the body to function properly, and without all of us doing our part, the whole body suffers.

3. Care for One Another

23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. - 1 Corinthians 12:23-26 NLT

We really are all in this together. God made us a family and sees us as a body. But for this imagery to become reality, we need to embrace all the parts that God has brought together. We must love and honor one another,

When Paul talks about those less honorable, he refers to those we may look down on. We have volunteers who rock babies, sweep cobwebs, make coffee, stock pantry shelves, paint benches and any number of other jobs to make our church a welcoming place for all who attend. You may never see them, but if they stopped doing their part you would certainly miss them.

What are some of the volunteer positions at New Life you are aware of?