

SERIES: The Mission – Joining God in His Work
“We Go Together with Christ” – 1 Corinthians 12:12-20, 27

INTRODUCTION

You probably have noticed that visiting the doctor, the Emergency Room, or registering for a hospital stay involves a predictable routine – especially at the beginning of the appointment. Most physicians begin by seeking to answer the same series of questions in order to get a broad assessment of your physical health:

How tall are you? (...and my favorite) How much do you weigh?
What’s your blood pressure? Do you have any allergies?
Do you smoke? Are you currently taking any medications?
Are you currently experiencing pain or discomfort? How would rate your pain?

Through hundreds of years of study, the medical profession has developed certain baseline measurements and acceptable criteria that help doctors perceive when a body may be out of alignment. The human body is intricately designed and amazingly complex, yet answering a few relatively simple questions can reveal a great deal of information about a person’s overall health.

Throughout the New Testament, the worldwide church is described as “the body of Christ.” Every individual disciple of Jesus has been included in that body, along with every local church and congregation. Jesus Himself governs and directs that church as its Head.

Interestingly, in the same way that a few basic questions can help evaluate a physical body, there are key factors that help us evaluate the health and productivity of the church as the body of Christ. We know the church is healthy when disciples of Jesus work together in a corporate effort to obey Him and make more disciples.

1 Cor. 12:27 – “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” So, let’s look at three factors that make a particular body of Christ, or congregation, a healthy and productive part of God’s kingdom here.

I. THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS MANY MEMBERS

A. TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH, PAUL STRESSED THIS POINT...

1. Just as the physical body, though one, has many members
2. So it is with the body of Christ
“The body is a unit, though it is made of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body” (v.12).

B. HE TOLD THE FOLKS IN ROME THE SAME THING...

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (12:4-5).

II. NOT ALL MEMBERS HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION

A. THIS POINT IS MADE MOST CLEARLY TO THE SAINTS AT ROME...

1. All the members do not have the same function - [Ro 12:5b](#)
2. We have gifts differing according to the grace given to us
“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully” (Rom. 12:6-8).

B. BUT IT IS IMPLIED IN HIS WRITING TO THE CORINTHIANS AS WELL...

1. In the verses following our text we see how God has appointed several different functions in the church – apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, those with a servant heart, administrators and leaders.

C. FAILURE TO APPRECIATE THIS POINT CAN BE DETRIMENTAL...

1. Detrimental to individual members
 - a. When members are led to believe that all Christians are to be alike, serving in the same way, it encourages some Christians to be what they are not, nor ever can be.
 - b. This leads to failure in their attempts to serve, which in turn can lead to discouragement and apathy, or perhaps even leaving the body altogether.
2. Detrimental to the function of the body itself
 - a. The body of Christ is designed by God to accomplish several functions (e.g., evangelism, teaching, fellowship and mercy).
 - b. But when people are expected to do the same thing, other important functions go undone

That's why over the summer we will be working on revitalizing the PLACE process to help each of us, whether we are a newer member or seasoned veteran, to better equip one another for ministry, and help each of us to find a PLACE in God's kingdom work here in His church.

III. EVERY FUNCTION IS CRUCIAL TO THE OPERATION OF THE BODY

A. NO ONE CAN SAY THAT THEY OR THEIR ROLES ARE NOT IMPORTANT...

1. As Paul illustrated in [1Co 12:15-20](#)

“If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”
2. There is no place for low self-esteem among members of the body of Christ!

B. NO ONE CAN SAY THAT WHAT OTHERS DO IS NOT IMPORTANT...

1. Paul saw that happening in Corinth...
2. There is no place for an arrogant independence among members of the body of Christ!

Have you ever gone to the shelf to pick out an old puzzle and start to put it together, only to realize that there are a couple of pieces missing...

Or how about picking a game to play with the family or company and discover that there are a couple of playing pieces or cards missing or the dice have been removed to be used for other purposes and you can't play the game as it was intended...

Or how about buying one of those furniture-in-a-box kits and you see that the company provided a couple of parts that don't fit...

Christ is telling each and every one of us today through the apostle Paul that each of us is indispensable. We all have a place in his family. We all have a part in advancing His mission of making disciples here on earth. Dear brother or sister in Christ, are you doing what you can to make yourself "useful to the Master"? The Lord is building His church and He wants to use you to open doors and expand His kingdom. May you be blessed and strengthened as you find your important PLACE in God's kingdom work here. In Jesus. Amen.