

SERIES: LIFE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- A. In an age of worship services on t.v., internet, and the numerous books and materials available, why do we need a spiritual family? Is being a member of your church important? Why not just attend church. Is it old fashioned to officially become a member?
- B. All Christians are called to be part of a local church. No amount of time spent in personal prayer, fasting, Bible study, or ministry can substitute for a believer's involvement in the Church.
Heb. 10:25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- C. Why do you need a spiritual family?
 - 1) You need a place where you can grow
 - 2) You need a place where you can use your gifts (both spiritual and natural).
 - 3) You need to belong to something bigger than yourself.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

I. THE BODY OF CHRIST

- A. There are many members (limbs).
 - 1. Jews or Greeks. There was a sharp division culturally, politically, historically between Jews and Greeks. Slave or free: economic, cultural distinctions that existed at the time.
- B. Yet, there is only One Body, the Body of Christ.
- C. We were baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body.
 - 1. Baptism by the Holy Spirit is that work of God whereby believers are baptized (immersed, placed) into Christ's body, the church.
 - 2. One of at least 5 baptisms mentioned in the Bible (Heb. 6:2 doctrine of baptisms) is the work in which at the beginning of the Christian life, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the Body of Christ. The emphasis in 1 Cor. 12 is the unity of it: One Spirit baptizes us into one Body.
 - 3. It is helpful to understand who the Agent of baptism is. Who is doing the baptism? Then see: who is the Element and Subject?
 - a. The Holy Spirit baptizes a believer into the Body of Christ.

(1) Baptism by the Holy Spirit. Everyone experiences this at the time of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit is the One doing this baptism. He immerses us (baptizes us), places, appoints us into Christ's Body.

- b. The pastor/elder baptizes a believer in water.
- c. The Lord Jesus Christ baptizing the believer in the Holy Spirit.

(1) The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the overflowing and empowering of the Spirit after salvation. Jesus is the One who is the Baptizer. (Acts 1:5; 8:14-17).

- 4. Have been made to drink into one Spirit. (John 7:37-39).
- D. You have been placed by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit gives each one individually at least one spiritual gift.
1 Corinthians 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.
 - 2. He also has placed that individual into the Body of Christ. This is not a general throwing into the church, but a specific placement just as He desires.

II. CELEBRATE THE DIVERSITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 12:14-19 For in fact the body is not one member but many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

- A. People sometimes do not submit to membership at a local church because of negative past experiences, lack of understanding of what a church is. The church is One body, many members.
- B. Don't live in isolation, alienation, alone.
- C. Appreciate the diversity and variety in the Body of Christ
 - 1. God is purposeful in His variety in the body and in the church. God has made the human body diverse. The eye does not look like the nose, like the kidney. Same in the church, there is a variety of gifts, experiences, backgrounds.
 - 2. Acknowledge what God has done. You are a member of the Body. Appreciate your place in the body. Affirm that and begin to live it out.
- D. Don't feel left out because you feel different or don't see how you fit.

1. Don't be jealous of other people's natural or spiritual gifting: I wish I can sing like, teach like, pray publicly like...
2. Be content and grow where you are.
3. God has placed, set, appointed, arranged each one. Just as He pleased.

1 Cor. 12:18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

III. COMMIT TO UPHOLDING THE UNITY OF THE MEMBERS

1 Corinthians 12:20-26 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. ²³ And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, ²⁴ but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, ²⁵ that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

- A. One body, many members → another extreme: Living in pride or arrogance.
- B. Appreciate other people's place in the Body.

Rom. 12:3-5 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- C. We need each other.
 1. Those parts that seem to be weaker are actually necessary.
 2. We think less honorable will actually get greater honor.
 3. Unrepresentable parts (not as pretty. A kidney, a lung?) have greater value, honor.
- D. There should be no schism (division) in the body.
 1. Members should have the same care for one another. Members caring for one another.
 2. One part suffers, all suffer. It affects the Body of Christ.
 3. One part is honored, all rejoice.

IV. COMMIT TO MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. ²⁸ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

- A. Each one of us are members of the Body of Christ.
- B. God appoints believers in the church. "Appoint" is the same word as in v. 18. God has set, placed, arranged each member in the body just as He pleased.
- C. You have been place by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. He places first apostles, second prophets, third, teachers and others where He is pleased to have them. Where He wills, wishes (v. 18).
- D. The Holy Spirit gives each one individually at least one spiritual gift. He also has placed that individual into the Body of Christ.
 - 1. Not a general throwing into the church, but a specific placement just as He desires.
- E. Membership at a church is an acknowledging of the spiritual reality of what God has done in baptizing us into the Body of Christ and committing to live the life of the Kingdom of God through the context of a local church.