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We Are The Body of Christ

1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-26

Introduction

1. Those of us who are Christians enjoy a special privilege this morning.
2. When we put Christ on in baptism, the Lord added us to those who were being saved.
3. This saved group of believers is referred to in Scripture not only as the “church,” but as “the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).
4. In Colossians 1:18, Paul wrote that Christ is the head of this body.
5. There are some things which Christ has done and continues to do for His body, the church:
 - a. He saves it (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5).
 - b. He nourishes and cherishes it (Ephesians 5:29).
 - c. He puts His Spirit within it to give it life (1 Corinthians 3:16).
6. As individual members of His body, there are some attitudes and responsibilities which we are to have and demonstrate toward one another.
7. In our reading this morning from 1 Corinthians 12, Paul pointed to a few of those which I would like for each of us to consider.
8. In keeping with our elders goal for us to become more involved in the Lord’s work and in each other’s lives I encourage you to join in this study with me.

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I. We Need Each Other

A. E PLURIBUS UNUM

1. This Latin phrase appears on the Great Seal of the United States and on the coins which many of us carry around in our pockets every day.
2. It is a traditional motto of the United States, but how many of us know what it means?
3. It means, "*Out of many, one,*" and is what Paul is saying in verse 12 of 1 Corinthians 12.

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

4. You and I are a part of a much greater whole — we belong to an organism whose “head” is Christ.
5. Our responsibility is to represent Christ to a fallen world.
6. We all became a part of Christ’s body, the church, in the same way (v. 13).

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13)

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B. THIS CAREFUL ARRANGEMENT WAS ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD

“But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired” (1 Corinthians 12:18).

1. You and I were not haphazardly thrown together in this body which Christ calls His church.
2. No, we were carefully arranged according to God’s perfect will.
3. This one body is made up of many members, and no one member should think he or she is any less important than any other member (vv. 15-17).

“If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is

not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?" (1 Corinthians 12:15–17)

4. Each of us need our feet just as much as we need our hands; our ears as much as we need our eyes.
5. Paul asked a very important question, "If they were all one member, where would the body be?" (v. 19).
6. Each of you is an important part of this church body:
 - a. Those who make phone calls, and send get well cards, and cards of encouragement to other members.
 - b. Those who cook meals and deliver care packages.
 - c. Those of you who consistently go before the throne of God on behalf of so many of us and the work here.
 - d. Those of you who clean the building, mow the lawn, maintain our buses, keep the heat and air working, put out the masks and communion kits, print our bulletins.
 - e. Those who shepherd us and serve us, who preach and teach, who operate our sound system, PowerPoint, who make possible our services on radio, T.V. and social media.
7. We cannot say to a single member, "We don't need you" (v. 21).
8. During WWII, General Eisenhower reprimanded a lower ranking general in the army for speaking of a soldier as "just a private," adding that "The private is the man who wins the war."
9. The truth is that we need each other and we need to communicate that on a regular basis.

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II. We Should Respect One Another

A. THE WORLD MODELS A DIFFERENT MINDSET

1. You and I have been taught by sports and the business model we often see around us that we must compete if we are to get ahead.
2. Our way to the top is over, around, or through another person.
3. We must minimize that individual or dismiss them while elevating ourselves and our own accomplishments.
4. How often have we heard it said, "This is a dog eat dog world."
5. Certainly, this is the way the Satan would have us see each other.

"And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (1 Corinthians 12:21)

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B. YOU AND I ARE TO SHOW HONOR TOWARD ONE ANOTHER

1. Paul taught a different mindset.
2. When it comes to our physical bodies, Paul said that
 - a. "the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor" (v. 23a).
 - b. "the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty" (v. 23b).
 - c. "our presentable parts need no special treatment" (v. 24a).
3. In Romans 12:10, he said that we are to "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" and "give preference to one another in honor."
4. We do this in the church so that, as Paul wrote in verse 25, "there may be no division in the body, and that the members may have the same care for one another."

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III. Sympathize With Each Other

A. WHAT AFFECTS ONE OF US, AFFECTS ALL OF US

“And if one member suffers, all members suffer with it . . .” (1 Corinthians 12:26a).

1. Have you ever stubbed your toe? Mashed a finger?
2. Did the rest of your body ignore it and go on?
3. No. The rest of your body experienced the pain.
 - a. Your mouth may have cried out.
 - b. Your eyes may have shed tears.
 - c. Your uninjured hand may have grabbed the injured hand.
4. Have you ever had a headache or an upset stomach?
 - a. Did it affect any of the rest of your body?
 - b. Were you able to go on as if nothing were wrong?
5. In Romans 12:15, Paul wrote, “weep with those who weep.”
6. This is what we do when one of our brothers or sisters . . .
 - a. Loses a loved one to death.
 - b. Receives a life threatening diagnosis.
 - c. Is let go from their job.

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B. IF ONE OF HAS REASON TO REJOICE, WE SHOULD ALL REJOICE

“ . . . if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26b).

1. In Romans 12:15a, Paul said we are to “rejoice with those who rejoice.”
2. We rejoice when someone puts Christ on in baptism.
3. We rejoice when a member receives a promotion or is recognized for an accomplishment.
4. We rejoice when prayers are answered on behalf of a brother or sister in Christ.

5. We rejoice when we see others walking faithfully in Christ.

Conclusion

1. Today, if you are a Christian, you are a part of God's wonderful design — that which Christ called "His church" (Matthew 16:18).
2. None of us are here by mistake or happenstance.
3. No, God chose to save us in Christ, before He ever created the heavens and the earth (Ephesians 1:4).
4. He also planned to bring us together as members of the body of Christ.
5. If we are to function as God intended then we must realize that we . . .
 - a. Need each other.
 - b. Should respect one another for who we are in Christ's body.
 - c. Have to sympathize with each other in the good and bad of our lives.
6. If you are not a Christian, let me encourage you to come to Christ in obedient faith.
7. Put Him on in baptism, let Him wash your sins away.
8. Then you will know the joy and encouragement that comes from belonging to something that is greater than any of us, something that is eternal and holds eternal reward.
9. There will be no greater rejoicing than when we all stand together on the last day before the One who saved us and made us His own.
10. Don't you want to be a "part of the family that's on its way home."