

Why Are You Here?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Introduction

Why are you here? Some of you come to church on Sunday to be with other like minded Christians. You want that fellowship with others. Some of you come to church because you want to hear good music or good preaching. You are still here, so that is a good sign, I suppose. Some of you are here because you feel obligated to be here. If it were not for a feeling of guilt and knowledge that God desires for us to gather together, you would be somewhere else. Some of you heard we were having a business meeting today, so you thought you better be here for that. I challenged you all a couple of weeks ago to consider the church as God's gift to you. Sure, God gave Jesus Christ, the ultimate gift of Himself, but He also gave the church so that we would have community and we would glorify Him together. God does not desire for us to be "Lone Ranger Christians". We need community and we need the church. Sadly, some do not see it that way. Some treat the local church as something that is not necessary. Others treat the local church as a train ride they can jump off and on whenever they choose.

These things ought not be. We need the church; but more than that, we need to *be the Church*. Of course, this requires a correct understanding of what church is. In our Church Members class, we discussed how a church is not a *building*, not a *club*, and not a *business*. We do not come to church, we are the church. The church is not like the country club with perks and privileges. You do not join a church to receive things, such as power, position, or gifts. You join a church in order to honor God and to serve Him with others and to minister to each other. A church is also not a business. This is not Burger King where you get it your way. We are His Church and we do it God's Way. So, what is a church? A church is a living organism. It can be healthy and it can be sick, and yes, *it can even die*. Thousands of churches close their doors each year. Paul used language in this passage to describe a living church. There are three truths regarding his description we see in this passage: 1) A church is one body with many members, 2) All members are necessary, and 3) Members care and share for one other.

One Body, Many Members

In this passage, Paul described the church as a body, comparing it to our physical bodies. Look at verse twelve in this passage.

1 Corinthians 12:12 ¹² *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*

This is a fitting description as there are a few things that are similar between our physical bodies and the church. For one, we each have *one body*. We do not have two, or three, but only one body, so we must take care of the one we have. The same is true for the church. We need to take care of her. We need to do those things that make the body of Christ, the church, healthy. Secondly, our physical bodies, though they are one,

have *various members*. We each have eyes, ears, arms, legs, hands, feet, and other members. These all make up the same body. Without our members, we would not have much of a body. The same is true for the church. Without members, there would be no church. Another truth in this comparison is that all of the members in our bodies are joined together in *unity*. The arms are not off doing their own thing apart from the body and the legs are not off doing their own thing apart from the body. If that happened, we would have some serious problems. It would be one big mess. So it is with the church. There is *one* church with *many* members who are joined together in *unity*.

The main thing Paul was saying here in chapter twelve is that there should be unity in the church. Though there are many members and each one is a unique individual, there is still one church. You could say that the church has *unity in diversity*. Just as there are many gifts but the same Spirit, there are many members but one church. Unfortunately, that is not always seen, is it? Someone gets their feelings hurt. Something does not go the way someone wants. The music is not the way someone likes, or the preacher does not preach like someone else. So, some stop coming to church. What they are really saying is this, "If you do not do it my way, I'm leaving." That is wrong! Then others in the church just say, "Well, let them go. We do not need them." Folks, the call to unity rests on each of us. We each need to be working out our issues together and pursuing unity in the body of Christ. Ask yourself, "What can you do to bring 'oneness' to the body of Christ?" Is there someone you need to reach out for reconciliation? Is there someone in this church, you have been pushing away or avoiding? Be one in the body!

All Members Are Necessary

The human body is truly a wonderful work of creation. All of the various members of our bodies working together is simply amazing. We have an awesome Creator. Think of getting a cut. When you get a cut, your body knows to send the right blood cells to patch up the cut. If there are not enough blood cells, you would bleed to death. If there is too much clotting, it would obstruct the flow of blood and you could die. Now, imagine you are seriously injured and the part of the body that controls blood clotting was not functioning. You might die. Imagine if your hands and arms were not working, you might not pick up a bandage or cloth and cover your injury. What if your legs or your mouth did not work, you might not be able to get help. Something as simple as a cut could become a very serious issue if the various parts of your body were not working properly. We need all of the members of our body to function properly.

So it is with the church. We need every member of the church to function properly to have a healthy church body. If someone is missing or has gone AWOL, the whole body suffers. All members in the church are necessary to the whole body. Just because you do not stand behind a pulpit or are on the stage or have a title or some position does not mean you are unnecessary. All members are a part of the same body and all members are necessary for the body to function. Earlier in chapter twelve, Paul wrote, "Each [of us] is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7) Each member of the church is given the same Spirit for the common good of the whole church. The question is, "Have you found what your gift is and are you using it?" Church

is a team sport and we need all players in the game. Sometimes, however, people do not think rightly about their role as a church member. Paul gave two examples of wrong thinking that some members in a church have.

- **Attitude of Inferiority**

In verse fifteen, Paul described an attitude of inferiority that many members have.

1 Corinthians 12:15-16 ¹⁵ *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. ¹⁶ 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.*

There are those in the church who think because they do not have the same role as someone else or they do not do as much as others do that they are not needed. That is simply not so. To use Paul's analogy, the foot is as much a part of the body as the hand. We need the feet, the hands, the eyes, and all the other parts to be a complete body. This is true for the church. We need everyone working together to be a healthy church. If you are a member of the church, you are very much needed.

But there is another way this attitude of inferiority manifests itself. There are those who are not happy until they have what someone else has. You know them. They want a particular position or role in the church. Because they do not have what they desire, they choose to not be a part of the body. Because they are not doing what someone else is doing, they would rather do nothing. God has placed each of us in the church for a reason. Just as it is with our physical bodies, God arranges the members in a church as He chooses. He has given you a gift and a role for you to accomplish what He desires. To reject that is to say that God does not know what He is doing. It is His Church. We have no right to run things as if it is our own personal club or business. The church is not a place to get your wants, but for us to determine God's will and then do it.

- **Attitude of Superiority**

There is also an attitude of superiority in the church. Look at verse twenty-one.

1 Corinthians 12:21 ²¹ *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."*

This attitude is often displayed by a sense of *independence*. There are members in the church who think they do not need the other members. You know who they are. They are the ones who think they are God's gift to the church. They think others in the church are not needed. They think the church could not exist without them. These are the folks who think because they have been here the longest, or have given the most, or have done the most things in the church, that they have no need for others in the church. They look down on others thinking they are better or more important than the other members. Paul described it like the eye saying to the hand, "I do not need of you."

Imagine a part of your body saying to another part, “I do not need you. I can function as the body all by myself.” We know that is not true. It is prideful to think this way. We need every member to function well as the whole body of Christ. We are all needed.

Members Care and Share for Each Other

We are each members of the same body, and each of us is important and necessary for the body to function well. We are also to care for one another and to share in each others pain and joy. The same is true for your physical body. If you stub your toe, your whole body is going to react to it. Likewise, when relief comes to a part of your body, your whole body enjoys that comfort. As members of the body of Christ, we are to care for and to share with each other. Look at the following verses.

1 Corinthians 12:24b-26 ²⁴...*But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

The first thing here is a reminder again about the necessity for unity. God composed the church as He desired so there would be *no division* within the body. More than that, God has done this so everyone would have the *same care for each other*. As members of the same church, we ought to share in each other's pain as well as each other's joy. When another member suffers, we should suffer with him, just as when one part of our physical body is in pain, the whole body suffers. When someone else in the church is suffering, you should as a fellow member of the same body, reach out to them to care for them. Ask them if there is anything you can do for them. Find out how you can pray for them. Be there to support and to care for them. Likewise, when another member in the church is honored, we should all rejoice. When something good happens to another, congratulate them and share their joy. What benefits one of us, benefits the whole.

Conclusion

So, why are you here? Is it to get something? Is it to become something? Is it to be a part of the body of Christ that seeks to glorify our Savior? Christ died to make us His people so that we would be His representatives to this world. How well do we represent Him? How well do we display the *unity through diversity* shown here in this passage? I recently came across an interesting saying that is oftentimes displayed at weddings. It said, “Pick a seat, not a side. We are all family.” That attitude applies to the church. There ought to be no sides in a church, except for God's side. We ought not to ask whether someone is on our side. We need to be asking are we on God's side. We are all members of His body, His family. But sometimes, it does not feel like family, does it. Why is that? It is because we are not being the Church. We are being something else.

Some of you come to church once a week. You spend one hour, maybe two, with your church family and then go home. If you did that with your husband or wife or children, how close would your family be? The English poet John Donne once wrote, “No man is

an island.” Regardless of what he meant by that statement, we are not alone. We are all in this together. No member is an island! We are joined together in Jesus Christ as His body. We need each other. Many of you want to see the church grow, but what kind of church are we trying to grow? We are not called to be successful, but we are called to love and serve one another. Maybe we should focus less on how to grow the church, and focus more on how to be the Church. Are we cultivating the fruit of the Spirit? Is there joy in serving the Lord no matter what the circumstance is? Are we loving, and caring, and serving one another now, because if we are not, then why would we expect others to be a part of us? Be the Church. Be His Body. Amen!

Questions for Meditation

- How can I be a better member of the body of Christ?
- How can I demonstrate “oneness” with my fellow church members?
- How can I better care for the other members in the church?
- How can I develop intentional relationships with my church family?