

We Go Together: Needed - 1 Corinthians 12:12-26
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

One of the significant problems for Christianity in our culture relates to how individualism has filtered into our faith. Americans are individualists, I believe in myself and pursue the dream for me. We actually believe that our success and happiness depends on me. In larger culture this individualistic spirit has often been to the detriment of any larger community, any larger sense of belonging to something communal and relational. In a previous era it was just normal for people to find involvement with defined groups of people. Anyone remember the Flintstones? For the writers of this cartoon, it was just normal that Fred and Barney were involved in the Loyal Order of the Water Buffaloes. Not so much any more. We don't have time, or really have the desire to be part of something that will require so much time, and more so, too much relational energy.

The way our individualism has shaped Christianity and the church in our culture is that we have changed the very definition of what it means to be involved in the church. When pastors were asked a generation or so ago to define what it meant to be actively involved in a church, most would tell that people should be at their church or active in their ministries at least once a week, and really, more than once. Ask most pastors now what it means to be active and they will tell you that a church member is regular if they make it to Sunday morning twice a month. Rather than viewing the church as a body, myself an important part, we now view the church as an event and my role is to show up and maybe pay some dues.

So here is the problem. God did not design us that way, and everything in the New Testament runs counter this spirit of the age. We were made for relationships, to be in community with people. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the imagery of our bodies to describe how the community of the church should function. A quick refresher on the definition of church in the New Testament. It was not a building or a place to go. There were no church buildings until the 300's AD. It was not a hierarchy, that didn't show up in the church until much later as well. It definitely wasn't an event, some churches met in caves and in secret. The New Testament church is always a people shaped by the Gospel, living in community, and given Jesus' mission. The early church found ways to gather as a whole community for worship and to hear the teaching of the Apostles proclaimed. They also gathered in smaller groups in homes for fellowship, to pray for each other, share meals, and care for each other's needs.

When we understand this understanding of the church, Paul's image of a body makes a lot more sense. Take time to read 1 Corinthians 12 carefully. Our text is set in a discussion about Spiritual gifts. It seems as if the church in this crazy city valued some gifts over others, which led to pride and arguments about importance. Paul does not downplay these gifts and their purpose among God's people, but what he does is to help us understand gifts in light of the working of a body. Paul is intentionally looking at a church that was becoming fragmented and he is pushing them back to deep relationship and community in the Gospel as the answer. The image is actually really simple. The local church is a single body in a specific location. Each member of the body really matters and no part is more important or vital. No part of the body should look at itself and say, "I don't matter and I'd rather be an eye," and therefore bug out. In fact, any body that only has 50% of its organs working is already dead. On the other hand, no part of the body should look at other body parts and say, "You aren't important, I don't need you." While your body is made up of many parts, and each part is vital for the body, it only works when your body

is working in relational synchrony. When parts of the body break down, the whole body hurts (just ask anyone with foot pain). On the other hand, when the body is working as a whole something beautiful happens and this body is on display to be seen for a lost world. And this body, the community of a local church is the body of Christ, the very presence of Jesus in a city or community for that city. Event oriented Christianity will never do this. It is the community of the church that is the beautiful community. Of course, it is made up of sinful, imperfect people, so it will always have warts and flaws. Nonetheless, when the church is a deeply relational community, the glory of Jesus is being displayed.

So, if you are part of the church, you are needed. You have a role to play in relationship to the rest. The place to discover your “place” at Genesis is in our Community Groups. So this is our encouragement to find your place in the body, and start (or continue) by growing in relationships in a group.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Revelation s 5	Revelation s 6	Revelation s 7	Revelation s 8	Revelation s 9	Revelation s 10	Revelation s 11

Reading from this past week: I Corinthians 12:12-26

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: I Corinthians 12:12-26

Family Worship

Song - *The Lord, My God, My Salvation*

<https://youtu.be/RgikQg40ZEw?feature=shared>

Gospel Project

Unit: God Rules over Creation

Story: We will be a Part of a New Heaven and New Earth

Big Picture Question: Who is God?

Answer: God is our Creator and the King of everything.

Scripture: Genesis 1-2

New City Catechism

Question 36: What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

Answer: That he is God, coeternal with the Father and the Son.

Verse: John 14:16-17

Scripture

I Corinthians 12:12-26

- If you and your family are part of Genesis, what led you here, and how did you join? According to verses 12-13, who actually put you in this body?
- How does Paul lean in to the metaphor of a body to describe the importance of community in our church? As a family or group, discuss as many implications as you can.
- How does this text reveal that we are important and needed in the life of the church? Why are Community Groups the best way to start finding your place?

Prayer

*Pray for our Mayor and city leaders.

*Pray that our church would live out the implications of the beautiful community