

The Body

The church is called the body of Christ. That means we are ALIVE. We are a body that has a head (Jesus) who gives us life. And He, as the head, instructs us, as the body, to do His plan.

Jesus is what we all have in common. But we are not all the same...we are different.

One of the most important things in the church is unity...unity in the Spirit...unfortunately what we see more often is unity in division, and this stems from our differences.

Can there be both unity and diversity in the church? Yes...Not only do I think the answer is "Yes", I am convinced that it is the ONLY way for a church to function properly and be healthy....unity and diversity (not division)

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (CSB)

For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink. 14 Indeed, the body is not one part but many.

1. The Church Is One Body Made Up of Many Parts

You can't have a body with just one part! Right? If it's separate from the body, we identify it as the part that it is. We don't call it a body.

So it takes many parts to make the body. Not only that but it takes different parts...but it's really nice to have more than one some parts...like eyes, arms, lungs!

But whatever parts make up that body, it's still one body. And this is what the church is like. It doesn't matter your race, your past, your personality, or anything else...we are different from each other, but of the same body. The body of Christ.

Paul mentions Jews and Greeks, slaves and free...these are people in opposite situations socially they don't think the same, act the same, or even believe the same...but then...they are joined together into one body but one Spirit...the Holy Spirit by faith in Jesus!

One body, many parts. So what about these parts?

1 Corinthians 12:15-20 (CSB)

If the foot should say, "Because I'm not a hand, I don't belong to the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an

ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as he wanted. 19 And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Your value and worth to the body is not dependent on what part you are. Your talents don't make you worth more or less...it's the fact that you belong to the body that gives you value...every part has value!

Some see their part as less important than another or even view it so lowly that they feel they are better off just not being a part of the body...

And this is why we see so many "Christians" who are not connected to the body. They might say "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian." well I suppose that's true...just like your foot doesn't have to be attached to your body to be a foot...but how effective is that foot on it's own?

The body is a unit that works TOGETHER...so they have to BE together to each do their part for the good of the whole body.

Some of you are just good at loving people. We need you.

Some are good at serving. We need you.

Some are good at cleaning. We need you.

Some are talented musicians. We need you.

Some are natural leaders. We need you.

Some are great at encouraging people. We need you.

Do you know that none of those things are unimportant? That none of those things are less than what I'm up here doing right now? Whatever your part is...whatever your talent is...don't think it's less important!

2. No One Should Think Too Lowly of Himself

Guys I've heard it more times than I can count. So often people don't serve the Lord through the body because they think too lowly of themselves.

If God gives you something to do. DO IT.

If He gives you something to say. SAY IT.

You have NO IDEA how much it could mean to someone else or how much we need it for all of us to function fully as God desires!

God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as he wanted.

If you're here today. It's not by mistake. God put you here and gave you what you've got...Whatever it is that you have to offer...it's needed! And it's not unimportant! So use it!

1 Corinthians 12:21-26 (CSB)

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" Or again, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that are weaker are indispensable. 23 And those parts of the body that we consider less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor, and our unrespectable parts are treated with greater respect, 24 which our respectable parts do not need.

Instead, God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the less honorable, 25 so that there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same concern for each other. 26 So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Every part of a normal, healthy body needs every other part.

Take the armpit for example...anybody want to be the armpit of Connection Church?

What do we think about armpits? Me and Kristi call Decatur the armpit of Illinois...it stinks, it's gross, we always avoid it if we can...seems like we don't really need it....like an armpit!

But did you know that your armpits are full of lymph nodes (about 20 in each). Lymph nodes are important to the body's immune system and filter out toxins from tissues. The rest of the body needs that...you catch that? The armpit is a benefit to the whole body!

In fact, Paul said those weaker parts are indispensable and we should honor them.

Because what they do isn't up front and noticed by all...we should honor them. It's like our people upstairs...sound and media. Sometimes people think Xander, Ashley, Rocky, Jace are not even here...but they get here early and sometimes stay late...they are up there serving in roles that benefit the body. They are putting words on the screen, making sure mics and instruments are on and turned up...

We only notice them if they stink a little! Which is rare...yet they are always here, serving the rest of the body!

Those who have platform ministries need those people upstairs...They make us successful!

3. No One Should Think Too Highly of Himself

One body, many parts...

Jesus is the head...He's the only part that has more value than the rest. He gives life to the rest of the body. It all flows from our relationship with Him.

You may be a part of the heart of Connection Church, seemingly involved in a little of everything, yet even the heart has many parts to it and all are needed to be it's best!

1 Corinthians 12:27-30 (CSB)

Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, next miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, leading, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

4. The Church Is the Body of Christ

One body, many parts.

God appointed these parts in the church. He established them. They are necessary parts of the body. And while we don't all have all of these gifts, the body is incomplete without any of them.

The body also suffers if we have the part with the gift, but it's not using it.

There are parts of the body that when they malfunction, the rest of the body picks up the slack...and it can do that for a while...but it still weakens the rest of the body or makes it less effective overall

Over in Romans 12, we see the gifts of the Father. These are gifts that every person is born with, it's part of what drives you. These are gifts that God gives us to serve Him with our lives. Every person has these, saved or not.

These gifts here are the gifts of the Spirit, and they are specifically for the benefit of the body of Christ...the church...each other.

As a church leader, this assures me that God has given us every resource that we need to accomplish everything that He wants us to do right now.

We don't have it all together, but together we have it all.

The problem we have is not everyone is serving Christ by being the functional part of the church that He placed them here to be!

We're glad you're here...but are you using your gifts and talents to benefit the body?

You know, for years we tried and tried to start new ministries, and appoint people to serve in them...and they were not really effective ministries...

In the last year or so, we've had people step it up and say, I really feel led to serve in this area, can we get this going? And those ministries are thriving! Why? We have people serving with their gifts and they are passionate about it!

We're getting ready to nominate deacons and elders today. Some of you are going to be nominated, and some of you are going to turn it down. Maybe because you think too lowly of yourself (you haven't done enough or aren't good enough), or maybe you think too highly of yourself (I don't have time, there are other things I'd rather do).

But what you need to think is this: What has God gifted me to do and how does that line up with the needs of the body?

How can I serve Jesus by serving the church? If there are obstacles in my way, what do I need to do to put God first.

He put you first when He died on the cross for you while you were still a sinner. He laid it all on the line. So that you could be His highest priority...so that you could live. So what are you doing with that life?

Do you need to accept Jesus for the very first time?

Do you need to recommit to Him today?

Do you need to say yes to serving Him and His body with the gifts He's given you?

We are one body with many parts. Let's be a healthy body and all do our part!