

25

RESTORING THE CHURCH - PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

The Body of Christ

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lesson is to help each believer see that he has an important place of function and ministry that no one else can fulfil and that it is absolutely necessary for the purposes of God to be fulfilled for each member of the Body to be actively involved in that ministry.

KEY VERSE:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Romans 12:1-5

I. WHAT DOES THE PICTURE OF THE BODY OF CHRIST HELP US TO UNDERSTAND CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH?

A. The Church as the body of Christ has one **Head**, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:24).

1. Christ is to be the **Sovereign Authority** in the Church (Ephesians 5:24).
2. Christ is the **Source** of life to the Body (Colossians 1:18; 2:11-13).
3. Christ is the **Sustainer** of the life of the Body (Colossians 2:19).

B. The Church as the body of Christ has many members (1 Corinthians 12:20).

1. Each member is vitally connected to the other members (Ephesians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
2. Each member is to function at the direction of the Head (Ephesians 1:21-22; 4:15-16).
3. Each member is totally dependent on the other members (1 Corinthians 12:21-22, 26).
4. Each member has an important place of function (1 Corinthians 12:27).

I. WHAT HAS GOD GIVEN TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST TO INSURE ITS GROWTH, HEALTH AND PROSPERITY?

- A. God has given natural abilities and talents that are to be used for His glory (Matthew 25:14-20).
- B. God has, by His Spirit, given spiritual gifts that are to be operating in the House of the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11).
- C. God has given each member of the Body a ministry, or function, that adds to the edification of the whole (1 Corinthians 12:28).
1. These ministries all find their origin in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. These ministries are merely an expression of Christ in you (Colossians 1:27).
 3. These ministries, functioning together, will make up, or compromise, the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23).

II. WHAT IS NECESSARY IF THE CHURCH IS GOING TO FULFIL, OR COMPLETE, THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

If the Church as the Body of Christ is to fulfil its ministry as God intended, each member is going to have to recognize and receive the ministry of others. This means several things:

- A. The member of the body must recognize that they are members one of another (1 Corinthians 12:7-27).
- B. The member of the body must be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50).
- C. The members of the body must seek the interest of the other members (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- D. The members of the body will always seek to strengthen, or edify, other members (Romans 14:19).

III. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO FIND MY PLACE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?

- A. Recognize that you personally have an important place of function and **responsibility** before the Lord (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 18).
- B. Recognize that God has made you **perfectly suited** to the ministry to which He has called you (Ephesians 2:10).
- C. Recognize that it is God who equips you with **the gifts** necessary to fulfil your ministry (Romans 12:3-6; 1 Peter 4:10).
- D. Recognize the headship of Jesus Christ and be **subject to** Him in all things (Ephesians 1:21-23; 4:15; 5:23).
- E. Recognize that all ministry equals and begins with **service** (Luke 22:26-27).

- F. Recognize the area of **service to** which God is calling you (Romans 12:3-5).
- G. Recognize that no one ministry is **more important** than another (1 Corinthians 12:21, 25).
- H. Recognize that all ministry develops over **a period of time** (Psalms 75:5-6).
- I. Recognize that we will only be as successful as we are willing to **sacrificially** apply ourselves (Romans 12:1-2, 10).
- J. Recognize that God is going to give you **special grace** or divine enablement to do His will (Philippians 2:13).

CONCLUSION:

God has called a body of people to flow together in harmony and unity to fulfil a common goal and purpose. That body is the Church of Jesus Christ, which is composed of individuals who have answered the call of the Gospel, who have joined themselves together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and who have laid down their wills to do God's eternal will. It is this body that is going to fulfil and complete the ministry of Christ on earth today.

"Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:5-6