
ONE ANOTHER

Part 1 - Loving the Body

Introduction

"Shouldn't the church be more than just cliques?"

Foundation of spiritual maturity in three areas:

1. Walking with God through all seasons.
2. Growing in faith and living out the Great Commission.
3. Building strong, Christ-like community.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:12-16

Key focus: The metaphor of the church as one body with many parts.

Context of Corinth and Challenges in the Church

Corinth's unique cultural setting: A coastal city with upward mobility through wealth and power.

Influence of societal competition on the church: Status-driven misuse of spiritual gifts, particularly tongues.

Paul addresses these issues in 1 Corinthians 12-14, centring on unity and love.

1. Unity is a Shift in Priorities

Unity differs from conformity:

- + Conformity demands sameness in thought and action.
- + Unity celebrates diversity under a common purpose—following Christ.

Redefining the body metaphor:

- + Roman culture: The emperor (Caesar) as the controlling head.
- + Paul's teaching: Christ as the head who unites and leads the church (Ephesians 4:15).

Paul's challenge to the Corinthians:

- + Move from "I-centred" priorities to "Christ-centred" unity.
- + 1 Corinthians 12:13: Unity through the Spirit, transcending divisions like ethnicity and status.

2. Christ as the Unifying Factor

Christ as the head: The source of direction and purpose for the body.

Unity requires prioritising Christ over personal preferences or societal influences.

Practical Application for the Church Today

The importance of prioritising Christ in personal faith and communal worship.

Avoiding divisions caused by comparison, status, or individualism in church life.

Embracing diversity of gifts and backgrounds to build a stronger community.

Conclusion

Reflection on the beauty and challenges of the church.

A call to grow in unity by shifting priorities to Christ.

Preview of the series: Exploring how biblical "one another" principles shape Christian community.

Discussion Questions

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-16. What does the metaphor of the body teach us about the value of diversity within the church?
2. How can prioritising Christ as the head of the church help us overcome personal differences or conflicts in the community?
3. Paul challenges the Corinthian church to move from an "I-centred" mindset to a "Christ-centred" unity. What are some practical ways we can make this shift in our own lives?
4. In what ways do societal values, like competition or status, influence how we approach church life? How can we guard against these influences?
5. Think about a time when you felt either included or excluded in a church community. How does this passage challenge us to ensure everyone feels valued?
6. How can recognising the gifts and contributions of others in the church help us build stronger relationships within the body of Christ?

Action Points

1. **Celebrate Diversity:** Identify and affirm one unique gift or contribution you see in another member of your church this week.
2. **Prioritise Christ:** Set aside time each day to pray specifically for unity in your church, asking God to help you focus on Christ as the head of the community.
3. **Serve the Body:** Find a small way to serve someone in the church this week, reflecting the love and unity described in the passage.
4. **Examine Your Attitude:** Reflect on any personal tendencies toward individualism or comparison within the church. Write down one step you can take to prioritise the good of the whole body over personal preferences.