

One Body, Many Members

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Main Idea

Restoration Church, we are one body with many parts therefore we should cultivate unity, celebrate diversity while building one another up in Christ.

Overview

The letter of 1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus...” That is, he’s writing to a real church in a real city with real members who were really living life together.

Restoration Church, we are one body, therefore cultivate unity (vv. 12-13)

- Paul highlights the “oneness” of the church 5 times
 - “The body is one.”
 - “Many members, one body.”
 - “One Spirit.”
 - “Baptized into one body.”
 - “Drink of one Spirit.”
- All of the members of the Corinthian church have received the Holy Spirit
 - This is the meaning of being baptized by the Spirit into one body
 - No one can say, “Jesus is Lord” – that is, regeneration – except by the Spirit (12:3)
- Unity is a present reality; not aspirational, but actual
 - “The body *is* one”
 - “We *are* one body”

Restoration Church, we have many members, therefore celebration diversity (vv. 14-20)

- Evidently some in the Corinthian church think they are not as valuable as other members, or they are not needed at all because they don’t have certain abilities.
- In verses 14-20 Paul addressed those who felt inferior and insignificant.
 - Some parts of the body feel inferior or insignificant – “I don’t belong to the body...”
- So Paul addresses the issue with a bit of hyperbole and rhetorical question asking.
- All body parts are needed – and not only are they needed, they need to be different
 - “If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?”

Restoration Church, we are one body with many members, therefore we need each other (vv. 21-27)

- In verses 21-27, Paul turns his attention to those who feel arrogant and self-dependent.
- Evidently some in the Corinthian church think they are so gifted and mature they don't need the rest of the body. Paul again calls out the error.
- Christians who seem – and notice it says “seem” – to have less important functions in the body of Christ, who seem to be weaker, are actually indispensable.
- Christians, who seem to be less honorable, are honored all the more by God himself.
- God gives us gifts and abilities not so that we can flaunt our own spirituality in perceived self-dependence.
- The purpose of God-given gifts and abilities to care for one another (v. 25-26)

Questions

Discussion Starter: Why are some of the dangers of living life as a Christian who is not connected to a church body?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-2. Who is Paul writing to? Why is this important to keep in mind?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. How does Paul highlight the unity of the church in this passage? How do you see unity at Restoration Church?
3. How does Paul highlight the diversity in this passage?
4. How do you see Paul stressing unity is not the same as uniformity? Why is this important to keep in mind in the context of our relationships with other church members?
5. Verse 18 says “God arranged the members of the body” and verse 24 says, “God has so composed the body...” What does this tell us about God’s care for the church body? How does this inform the way we should relate to other church members?
6. Paul says we should “suffer with those who suffer” and “rejoice with those who rejoice.” What does that mean? Which do you find harder to do? Why?
7. In verses 14-20, Paul addresses those who feel inferior or insignificant. In verses 21-27 he addresses those who feel arrogant and self-dependent. Are you given to feel either of these ways? If so, how?
8. What does this passage tell us about strong and “weak” members? How do they serve one another? Why are all members needed for a healthily functioning church?

Accountability: *Praise God for the gospel unity of our church. Confess any areas where you’re more focused on unmet personal needs/dislikes rather than on serving the body.*

Adoration

- Praise God for our salvation in Christ, that we have received the Holy Spirit and can say, “Jesus is Lord”
- Praise God that he has made us one body in Christ.
- Praise God that other Restoration Church members are not just like you
- Praise God for the gospel unity of our church

Confession

- Repent of ways you’re not pursuing unity with other brothers/sisters
- Repent of any grumblings/complaints about unmet personal preferences/dislikes that have marked you
- Repent of thinking the church would be better if everyone were like you and primarily seeking to develop/deepen relationships with people who are like you
- Repent of not celebrating diversity as God has arranged it

Petition

- Ask God that we’d be a church that’s a compelling community to the lost, and that God would save people through our gospel ministry
- Ask God that he’d give us the grace to put our personal preferences below gospel priority
- Pray that we’d continue to cultivate unity and celebrate diversity while building each other up in Christ
- Pray that God would bring us increasing generational diversity
- Pray that God would bring us increasing socioeconomic diversity
- Pray that we would be a church that suffers well with each other
- Pray that we would be a church that rejoices well with each other