

One Another – Members Of

Text : **I Cor. 12: 12-27**
 (**Rom. 12: 5-8, Eph. 4: 1-7, 25**)

INTRODUCTION :

- A. Have you noticed how much different you feel here than anywhere else ?**
1. There are two places where the Christians should feel most comfortable.
 - a. In his own home.
 - b. In God's house.
 2. Of course, God's house is not a building.
 - a. God's house is built with "living stones."
I Pet. 2: 4-5 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 - b. No one goes into God's house without being made an actual part of it.
 - c. Christians **are** the house ... it is God who dwells **in** the house.
 3. Each congregation is like a room in that house of God.
 - * a. We sometimes mistake the church building for the house of God, because it is the only place we interact with other Christians.
 - b. We sometimes come to view our congregation as the whole house of God for the same reason; it's the only place we have interaction with Christians.
 - c. All of the congregations around the world make up the one house of God.
 (**Please note that I did not say, "all of the denomination around the world."**)
- B. We feel more comfortable here than elsewhere because we have a commonality with other Christians that we don't have with anyone else on the planet.**
1. We are bound eternally by the blood of Christ, by faith and by our eternal destiny.
 2. We are citizens of Heaven sojourning as aliens among the people of this world.
 3. This world's culture is so foreign to ours that we can never feel comfortable in it.
- C. As we journey through this culture en route to Heaven, if we are to survive, we must band together as one.**
1. This organized banding together as the *ekklesia* of Christ is the wisdom of God.
 2. EVERY stone in the house is responsible to support every other stone in the house.

D. God places great emphasis on each Christians fulfilling his responsibility to all.

1. He requires that the entire *ekklesia* assemble frequently to reinforce each other.
 - a. We have seen that to church in the N.T. met daily for fellowship and study.
 - b. The church is required to meet weekly for the partaking of the communion.
2. No one succeeds at anything by just doing the minimum.
 - a. No company wants an employee who seeks to do the least he can get away with.
 - b. Certainly, no one succeeds in business without committing himself to it, working.
3. So it is, one who seeks to just get by in God's church will not be accepted by God.

E. Over the past number of weeks we have observed many ways God requires every Christian to be involved in the spiritual welfare of other Christians.

1. The sheer volume of commands makes it clear that God places a high value on it.
2. Clearly, it is not optional behavior. *God requires it of every Christian. Mat. 7: 21*
 - a. Failure to obey is sins.
 - b. Refusal to obey is willful sin ... rebellion against God.

It is for this reason that we've spent so much time on this series of lessons. It's essential to your salvation and also essential to the survival of the church.

I. God requires His people to function as an interdependent unit. Not as loners.**A. He presents this principle in many different scriptures, e.g.,**

Rom. 12: 3-5 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. ⁴ For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1. Every Christian functions as a member of a single body with a single purpose.
2. In the collective we are the body of Christ on the earth. *Not individually.*
I Cor. 12: 27 – Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.
3. THUS, each of us must see ourselves as component parts, as organs in the body.

B. Me first living is killing God's church. (All be like Bro. Howard's gift of giving.)

1. People of the world think in terms of themselves, of their benefit, of their position.
2. According to **Rom. 12: 5** God made us component parts ... not individual units.

C. God uses a human body to illustrate the conduct He expects from each of us.

1. Each Christians is only a body part ... *not an independently functioning body.*
2. No part of the body functions independently of the rest of the body.
 - a. Remove any organ and it will die.
 - b. Every body-part depends on the rest of the body to enable it to function.
3. The body can only function normally if all the body-parts function as a unit.
 - * a. *There is only one brain in each body.*
 - b. Every body-part must submit to the control of the brain. *All Christians submit to Christ*

D. We must never lose sight of the fact that this is God's design for His body, his ch

1. The people of the world succeed by excelling above others.
2. Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven succeed by lifting up others. *By Being Like Jesus.*

II. Ethnic, socio-economic and cultural differences cause division in this world, but differences are essential for the success of the *ekklesia* of God.

A. I Cor. 12 : 18-20 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But now there are many members, but one body.

B. Imagine how dysfunctional any body would be if all the organs were the same.

1. No matter which organ one chooses, the body would not function with many like it.
2. How long would you live if every organ in your body was a brain, or an eye, or ...
3. Your body needs diversity and so does the body of Christ.
 - a. We need people who are educated and those who have less education.
 - b. We need people who are assertive and those who need more motivation.
(*My daddy farmed with a blind horse and a crazy mule. Both were worthless by themselves, but they worked well together.*)
4. Imagine a congregation where every member was an elder, or a preacher, or ...
 - a. Every congregation needs a variety of skill sets, of abilities, of temperaments ...
 - b. We need skill sets that complement each other. (*Friend set up study, I teach*)
5. When God put you in this congregation, He knew exactly what you had to offer it.
 - a. Every organ receives it's sustenance from the body. *We all need the body.*
 - b. Every organ contributes something to the functioning of the body. *All benefit.*

C. There is no such thing as a vestigial organ in the Lord's body.

1. Every member is individually placed in the body by God Himself.

I Cor. 12 : 18 – **But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be**

2. You're in this congregation because God placed you here. ... ***YOU need to function !***
 - a. God placed you here for a reason ... to fulfill a specific function.
 - b. The body has a function and every one of you are important to that function.

**** You are so important to God's plan that He died to purchase you.**

D. You don't need to be like anyone else, but you need to be active.

1. Be the best you that you can.
2. Keep developing yourself as yourself.
 - a. **Heb. 5: 12** ... **God expects you to grow.**
 - b. The Father knows what potential HE put in you. (*Remember ... Psa. 139*)
 - c. In the parable of the talents, **God** determined who got what and He judged them.

*** There is no such thing as a no talent man.**

3. NO ONE'S gift is to weight down a pew.
 - a. *In all these years of preaching, I've never seen those empty pews float away.*
 - b. *I've never seen an empty pew get so cold it shivered or caught a cold.*
 - c. **But**, *I've seen Christians just set on pews until they atrophy and die spiritually.*

John 15: 2 – **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.**

III. By earthly standards, what God requires of Christians is not normal.

A. When one accepts what Jesus Christ offers he agrees to change his worldview.

1. **Rom 12: 1-2** **Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, ...**

2. The transformation requires a change in the Christians value system.

3. The transformation takes the Christian out of conformity with social norms.

*** It is within the nature of man to strive to fit in and to be accepted by society.**

B. It's normal for people to make compromises to gain acceptance, but Christians consistently hold to their integrity obeying only God.

1. **II Tim. 3: 13-14** But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. **14** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ...
2. As the world changes, Christians become increasingly out of step with it.

C. The world expects all relationships to be reciprocal.

1. *“You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.”* This is normal for the world.
2. Christians love their enemies and pray for those who oppress them.

D. Nothing about the Christian's relationships conforms to social norms.

1. It's not normal to put one's relationship with an unseen God above all others.
 - a. It's not considered normal to be willing to die rather than to deny one's God.
 - b. It's not normal for one to be willing to lose everything gain an unseen home.
2. It's not normal to put one's relationship with that God's family above one's own.
3. It's not normal to respond to evil by doing good to those who hurt us.

*** Nothing about Christianity is natural ... It's to rise above normal to be like Jesus.**

CONCLUSION :

A. Because we are called upon to lead such an abnormal life, we need help.

1. God designed His church to be the support group which enables us to stand.
2. Jesus was lead into the wilderness to face Satan one against one. **Matt. 4**
 - a. He knows the pressures that we face. **Heb. 4: 15** – has been tempted in all things
 - b. So he has provided a way for us to stand. **I Cor 10: 13** – provide the way of escape

B. It is important that we stand and prosper in Christ because :

1. Our eternal destiny depends upon it.
2. The future of the church depends upon it.
3. Because the souls of millions of lost people depend upon it.

(The church exists to propagate the gospel on the earth, i.e., to save souls.)

INVITATION :

Lesson Text :**I Cor. 12: 12-27**

12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. **13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. **15** If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a *part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a *part* of the body. **16** And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a *part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a *part* of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. **19** If they were all one member, where would the body be? **20** But now there are many members, but one body. **21** And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." **22** On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; **23** and those *members* of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, **24** whereas our more presentable members have no need of *it*. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked, **25** so that there may be no division in the body, but *that* the members may have the me care for one another. **26** And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Lesson Subtexts :**Romans 12: 1-8**

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. **3** For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. **4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Ephesians 4: 1-7

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, **3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. **7** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.