

The Reality of the Body of Christ

Romans 12: 4-6 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, **so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body**, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

I Corinthians 10:15-17 You are reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am about to say is true. When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the blood of Christ? And when we break the loaf of bread, aren't we sharing in the benefits of the body of Christ? And we all eat from one loaf, showing that **we are one body**.

I Corinthians 11:23 and 29 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he broke *it*, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.** ... For he that eat and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, **not discerning the Lord's body**.

Ephesians 1:22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church, which is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 3:3-6 How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the **mystery of Christ**), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: **that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body**, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,

Ephesians 4:4-6 **There is one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Ephesians 4:11-16 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ**, till we all come to the unity of the faith and

of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, **to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**

Ephesians 5:22-33 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also **Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body**. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.** "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Colossians 1:18 **And He is the head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of **His body, which is the church**,

Colossians 2:19 and not holding fast to the Head, from **whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.**

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also **you were called in one body**; and be thankful.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But **a body You have prepared for Me.**

I Corinthians 12:12-27 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. **So it is with the body of Christ.** Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. **But we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit**, and we have all received the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am only an ear and not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? Suppose the whole body were an eye – then how would you hear? Or if your whole body were just one big ear, how could you smell

anything? But God made our bodies with many parts, and he has put each part just where he wants it. What a strange thing a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." In fact, some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect from the eyes of others those parts that should not be seen, while other parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together in such a way that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. **Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.**

Key Thoughts Concerning the Body of Christ

1. The Body of Christ is a spiritual reality, not a metaphor or parable or illustration. The Church IS the Body of Christ in the world. Therefore the church is not a building, organization, program or anything other than the PEOPLE of God who gather.
2. There is ONE Body – not many – regardless of how men want to chop it up and exclude one another. There are two expressions of that Body
 - a. The Universal Body (Catholic) that contains all the Christians past, present and future
 - b. The local expression of the Body we call churches – Local Churches may be different parts of the same Body, doing different things and performing different functions
3. You are an important part of the Body of Christ whether you totally understand or appreciate it or not – and the Body has need of you and your unique gifts God has give to you.
4. You are not and cannot be the Body of Christ by Yourself. The Body is not one member but many. We need one another for the fullness of Christ to be present. This is why he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be there in the midst of them."
5. We are members one of another. Not only are we connected to Christ, but to be so, we must be properly connected to one another. If it is to work right, my hand needs to be connected to the end of my arm.
6. When Jesus died he broke apart the totality of his ministry and imparted and invested it to every person in the church, this includes the motivational gifts of Roman 12, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in I Corinthians 12 an the 5 fold ministry gifts in Ephesians 4.
7. Unity in Diversity: Different members have different gifts and different roles and all are necessary I Corinthians 12
8. The Body is to minster to itself in love and edification, building itself up to maturity in Christ.
9. The Body is to express the fullness of Jesus Christ in the World. It is only when the whole body of Christ – including you and me – receive this truth and stat walking in it will the world see Jesus in His fullness. This is God's plan for the church.