

Paul says (v.24) “presentable parts need no special treatment”. Sometimes people leave a local body or develop attitudes of self sufficiency because they had a special need they felt wasn’t met. Is that what leads you to feelings of self sufficiency?

Friday

Read 1 Corinthians 12:25-26. Paul writes that there should be no division in the body and that every member should show equal concern for every other member.

1. In what ways do you see division in the body of Christ at FBC? How might you contribute to closing those divisions?
2. How many people in the church do you have a meaningful spiritual relationship with? List them.
3. As you review this list of significant spiritual relationships, does the list suggest that your concern for the members is equal to all? Or, do you have others you are significantly more concerned about?
4. How can you show more equal concern for each member? How can you encourage and help others do the same?

Saturday

The main actor in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 is God. He is the one that selects and places each person/member in the body “just as He wanted them to be.” It is God the holy Spirit who baptizes all Christians into the body of Christ. And the church is Christ’s body. The Church is a work of each Person of the Trinity.

1. How does this affect your view of FBC as a church?
2. How does this affect your view of God’s involvement in your life? In your part in the church?
3. As a result of God’s truth in 1 Cor. 12:12-27, what kinds of things should you pray for the church? For yourself as a member? For other churches?

Life Together: Spiritual Fellowship in the Church

A Daily Study Guide for Further Reflection

I Corinthians 12:12-27

Monday

A Parable

By Jonathan Leeman, in What Is A Healthy Church?

Nose and Hand were sitting in the church pew talking. The morning service, led by Ear and Mouth, had just ended, and Hand was telling Nose that he and his family had decided to look for a different church.

“Really?” Nose responded to Hand’s news. “Why?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Hand said, looking down. He was usually slower to speak than other members of the church body. “I guess because the church doesn’t have what Mrs. Hand and I are looking for.”

“Well, what are you looking for in a church?” Nose asked. The tone in which he spoke these words was sympathetic. But even as he was speaking to them he knew he would dismiss Hand’s answer. If the Hands couldn’t see that Nose and the rest of the leadership were pointing the church body in the right direction, the body could do without them.

Hand had to think before answering. He and Mrs. Hand liked Pastor Mouth and his family. And Minister of Music Ear meant well. “Well, I guess we’re looking for a place where people are more like us,” Hand finally stammered. “We tried spending time with the Legs, but we didn’t connect with them. Next we joined the small group for all the Toes. But they kept talking about socks and shoes and odors. And that didn’t interest us.”

Nose looked at him this time with genuine dismay: “Aren’t you glad they’re concerned with odors?!”

“Sure, sure. But it’s not for us. Then, we attended the Sunday school for all you facial features. Do you remember? We came for several Sundays a couple of months ago?”

“It was great to have you.”

“Thank you. But everyone just wanted to talk, and listen, and smell, and taste. It felt like, well, it felt like you never wanted to get to work and get your hands dirty. Anyway, Mrs. Hand and I were thinking about checking out that new church over on East Side. We hear they do a lot of clapping and hand-raising, which is closer to what we need right now.”

“Hmmm,” Nose replied. “I see what you mean. We’d hate to see you go. But I guess you have to do what’s good for you.”

At that moment, Mrs. Hand, who had been caught up in another conversation, turned back to join her husband and Nose. Hand briefly explained what he and Nose had been talking about, after which Nose repeated his sadness at the prospect of losing the Hands. But he again said that he understood since it sounded like their needs weren't being met.

Mrs. Hand nodded in agreement. She wanted to be polite, but truth be told, she wasn't sad to be leaving. Her husband had made just enough critical remarks about the church over the years that her heart had begun to reflect his. No, he had never burst into an open tirade against the body. In fact, he usually apologized for "being so negative," as he put it. But the little complaints that he let slip out here and there had had an effect. The small groups were a little cliquish. The music was a little out of date. The programs did seem a little silly. The teaching wasn't entirely to their liking. In the end, it was hard for the two of them to put their fingers on it, but they finally decided that the church wasn't for them.

In addition to all that, Mrs. Hand knew that their daughter Pinkie was not comfortable with the youth group. Everyone was so different from her, she felt out of joint.

Mrs. Hand then said something about how much she appreciated Nose and the leadership. But the conversation had already run on too long for Nose. Besides, her perfume made him want to sneeze. He thanks Mrs. Hand for her encouragement, repeated that he was sorry to hear of their departure, then turned and walked away. Who needed the Hands? Apparently, they didn't need him.

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think most people look for in a church?
2. Do you think those things are biblical? List some Bible references to support your answer.
3. Have you ever been in a situation like that of Hands and Nose? Were you more like the Hands or Nose?
4. How did you handle the situation? Was your response biblical? If not, what would the Lord have do differently? List some Bible references for your answer.
5. How do Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; and Ephesians 4:11-17 address the Hands? Nose? You?

Tuesday

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. Paul says all Christians are baptized in the Spirit of God and that we drink from one Spirit.

1. What are some ways our oneness in the body of Christ to be shown in the local church? List some Bible references to support your answer.
2. Our oneness in Christ's body transcends worldly divisions like Jew and Greek, slave and free. Would you say that your personal relationships in the church reflect unity across cultural and social divisions?
3. If not, do you think you should make an intentional effort to get to know more Christians from different backgrounds? Why or why not?
4. Make a list of FBC members from different cultural backgrounds that you'd like to get to know. Pray about a specific way to get to know them in the next month.

Wednesday-Thursday

Read 1 Cor 12:14-27.

1. Are you more like a hand or foot, tending to think you are unnecessary to the body, or like an eye or head, feeling that you don't need others?

For those who feel like a hand or foot.

2. If you feel unnecessary, how do v. 15-20 speak to your situation?
3. Do you recognize that a claim to be unnecessary does "not for that reason (because you feel that way) cease to be part of the body?" How has wrong thinking at this point affected your relationship with others? Your participation in church?
4. How might God use you as a unique member in the body of Christ? If you could serve in any way imaginable, what would that be? What prevents you? What do you need to get started? Make a plan.
5. Do you know how the Lord has gifted you spiritually? Are you using that gift? Often, the best way to discover your gifts is to serve and take note of how the Lord uses you and of what seems to benefit others most. What needs are there in the church that you can begin to serve even if you don't know your gifts? Who can be partners with you in the service to help you discover your gifts?
6. Do you think He has mad a mistake with you? If so, how so? If not, how do you need to address feelings of inadequacy or of being unnecessary?
7. How does the fact that God arranges the parts in the body as He sees fit encourage those who may feel insignificant and unnecessary?

For those who feel like an eye or a head

8. If you feel independent, like you don't need others, how might you develop greater dependence upon and gratitude for others?
9. How might you show other members greater honor and special understanding?