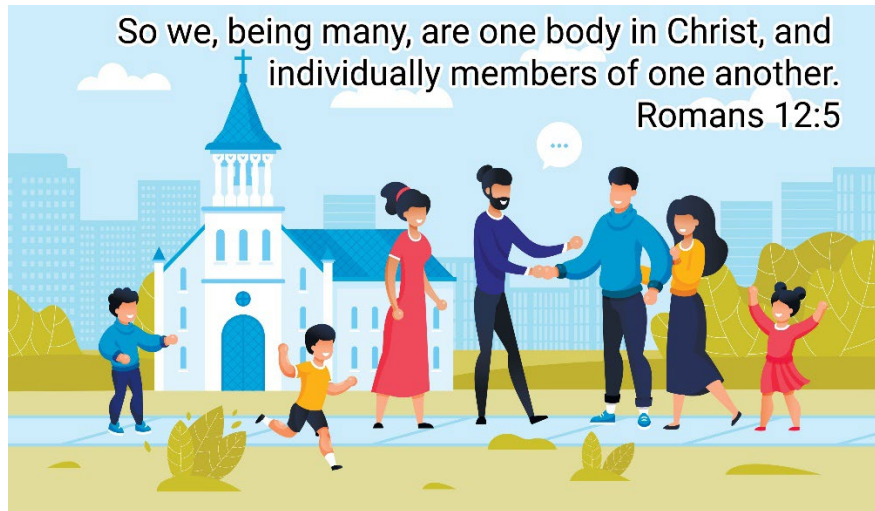


Hymns 167, 171, 479, 528, 599, 701, 705

Evening Worship / May 7, 2023

“Members of Christ’s Body” Romans 12:4-8



I. If we are true Christians, we are members of Christ’s body and vitally connected to Jesus Christ and one another –

⁵ so we, *being many*, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.
Romans 12:5 (NKJV)

1. The word “membership” at least as it is used concerning the Biblical Christian Church, is rooted in this concept of us being MEMBERS of Christ’s body, Jesus Christ Himself being our head –

A. No pastor is the HEAD of the Church, maybe we are mouths, or tongues, but Jesus is the Mind behind what we should say –

¹⁶ ... But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:16 (NKJV)

B. We are Christ’s body therefore we are dependent upon our connection to Him, and also to our connection to each other –

John 15:5 shows us how vital our connection to Christ is -

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NKJV)

Romans 12:5 shows us our important connection to each other!

2. This is why local church membership is important, only Daniel 5:5 and horror movies do we see dismembered hands operating without connection to a arm, shoulder and body –

⁵ In the same hour the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.
Daniel 5:5 (NKJV)

3. The song, "We are God's People" #355 in your hymnal, communicates at least part of this truth well –

*"we die alone, for on its own each member loses fire;
yet joined in one the flame burns on to give warmth and life and to inspire"*

Moses was a great man of God and yet before Pharaoh he needed Aaron's eloquence and the battle with Amalek, he needed both Aaron and Hur, their strength, to help him keep his arms and the Rod of God up, showing their connection and dependence upon God.

- II. *We need each other because just like David said of his body, I am fearfully and wonderfully made, so is the church- fearfully and wonderfully made, many members, complimentary functions -*

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, Romans 12:4 (NKJV)

1. The scientist, Michael Behe, came up with the phrase "irreducibly complex" to describe the cell. I believe the same phrase might be used of Christ's Church. Jesus said –

¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)

Two things I want you to notice about this verse:

- A. Who builds the church, Jesus says, **"I will build My church"**

- B. How well He builds it –

... and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18 (NKJV)

- Jesus says the gates of Hades will not prevail against His church despite the fact, that His helpers in building it are weak and fallible –

²⁶ For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—³¹ that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NKJV)

- And even worse the enemy is able to sow tares among the wheat –

²⁴ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' " Matthew 13:24–30 (NKJV)

C. *Note too, the church is compared to both a building and a field –*

⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are God's building.* 1 Corinthians 3:9 (NKJV)

D. *Not only are we as the church the building and the field, we are the builders who build the building and the laborers in the field, this is a building built with living stones –*

⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and precious,* ⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "*Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.*" ⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious;* but to those who are disobedient, "*The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,*" ⁸ and "*A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.*" They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. ⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1 Peter 2:4–10 (NKJV)

2. *When talking, thinking of the wonder and complexity of Christ's church not only is it a building, a field and a building built with living stones but also a city and ultimate Jesus Christ, the Lamb's bride / wife, in this sense too we are His body connect to Him –*

⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. ¹² Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹⁴ Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:9–14 (NKJV)

Note consisting of both OT & NT believers, we are the bride ...

III. *However, we are not just the building, if that was not enough, we are also fellow laborers with Christ, we are builders -*

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them:* if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; ⁷ or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; ⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:6–8 (NKJV)

We all have gifts, no one is left out!

This list is not all of them – 1 Corinthians 12:27-28 lists some more! This second list might not include them all either.

1. *Prophecy – predictive, authoritative, writers of Scripture in this sense we no longer have apostles and prophets – MINISTRY of GOD's WORD ---*

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A. *In the broader sense, calling men and women to repentance, maybe we still have “prophets” but now I would prefer to call them evangelists, pastors and teachers.*

B. *These are ministers of God’s word – mouths or tongues in Christ’s BODY.*

2. *Ministry – Greek diakonian service, in my previous churches only the Pastor visited people in hospitals. In this church I noticed OFTEN,*

when I visited someone in the hospital not only was the family of that person there, but some of you were there too, even if you were not related to the person. Hands and arms of Christ body –



3. *Teaching – again the Pastor but not only the Pastor -*

⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Deuteronomy 6:5–7 (NKJV)

³the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—⁴that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Titus 2:3–5 (NKJV)

4. *Exhortation – parakaleo To call alongside, to plead, someone who calls someone else to duty or to help!*

Ron’s Phonevite is an exhortation to attend church each Sunday!

5. *Giving – Money, Food, Things ... Sincerity / Generosity*

6. *Leadership / management, organization*

7. *Mercy – imagine a woman came into the church dressed inappropriately ...*

A merciful person might see that person not with judgmental eyes, but compassionate eyes! Noticing not only clothing, but tears...

Seven Gifts are listed here. I believe God has given the church many more gifts than 7. However, 7 is the number of completion and perfection! God’s perfectly GIFTS His church!