

The Church Part III: The Body is One

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West High Street Church of Christ Sunday PM January 22, 2007

Introduction

The Church, the ecclesia, is a group of called out people. It is composed of imperfect people trying to live as closely to the perfect example of Jesus as possible. In order to do this, we must put aside carnal thoughts and actions and focus ourselves on that which is spiritual. We must function as one body, the body of Christ.

The Body is One

- I. Sometimes the idea arises among Christians that one person or group of persons serves a greater purpose than another person or group.
 - Along with this goes the idea that one or another is of more importance.
- II. This is not new.
 - **Mark 10:35-37** James and John, the Sons of Zebedee, called the Sons of Thunder
 - **Mark 10:41-45** Jesus' teaching on rank and authority.
 - **Mark 9:33-35** the first shall be last.
- III. It is true that certain ones are to be given respect because of who they are or the function that they serve: elders both in the sense of office and of greater age and parents come to mind. **I Timothy 5:17, I Peter 5:5, Colossians 3:20**
 - These are not the only examples that the Bible gives.
- IV. It is not true that anyone is of greater importance to God than another.
 - **Acts 10:34** God is no respecter of persons.
- V. **I Corinthians 12:12-20** One Body, many members.
 - **Ephesians 4:11-12** Some prophets, evangelists, etc.

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- **Matthew 25:14-29** The parable of the talents.

VI. The body is to work together and to be of one mind, one purpose.

- **Ephesians 4:1-6** unity of the spirit, one body etc.
- **John 17:17-21**

The Parts of the Body

I. We should consider how a local group of this called out body is organized as well.

II. First, as we have seen the body is comprised of individual Christians, each one important in God's eyes, and each one with a function to perform, **Acts 2:47, 10:34, Mark 10:41-45, and Ephesians 4:11-12.**

III. Among these Christians comprising the body, all are to be teachers, though only some will be teachers in the sense of public teaching.

- **Hebrews 5:12** Ye ought to be teachers.
- Teachers are held to a greater standard.
- **James 3:1 (ESV) Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.**

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IV. There will also be one or more preachers among these Christians in a local congregation.

- This does not necessarily mean only the “regular” preacher.
- There is no distinction between preachers and other Christians, except in the function that they perform. There is not “clergy” and “laity” in the sense that denominations use.
- Preachers are required to be an example and are held to a greater standard.
 - **James 3:1** As we have already read.
 - **I Timothy 4:12-16** Paul’s instruction to Timothy as a young preacher.

V. Congregations are to have men who are given the oversight of the Church.

- These are called elders, bishops, pastors, or shepherds in the Bible.
- A Church can exist without elders, but it is God’s will that there be qualified men to serve, **Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5**.
- There must be more than one in a given congregation. Notice the plural usage in both **Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5**.
- They are to rule over the local Church, and only the local Church,
I Peter 5:1-3.
- Christians are to submit to the authority of elders in congregations that have them, **Hebrews 13:17**.

VI. Deacons are also to be part of a local Church where such is possible.

- The word deacon or deacons appears only in two places in the Bible: once in **Philippians 1:1** and several instances in **I Timothy 3:8-11**.

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- The word deacon means an attendant or a waiter; it refers to one who carries on menial tasks. In the case of the Church, it seems to indicate those who aid elders in their duties, carrying out the physical tasks and thus freeing the elders to tend to spiritual matters.
- Many believe that those chosen in **Acts 6:1-6** were the first deacons, though the Bible does not specifically say so.
- **I Timothy 3:8-13** Qualifications of deacons.

Conclusion

When individual Christians work together, when all are of one mind, serving one purpose, then the body functions as God desires it to do. It is when we forget our purpose, when we lose our focus that we fail to do this and problems arise.

Ephesians 4:11-16