# A Diversified - UNIFIED Church Body

**I Corinthians 12:12-31**

10-8-2023

Introduction: v.12

**** Each & every member must see his/her vital role in the Body of Christ!***

**I. Every member is united by <u>SPIRIT BAPTISM</u> into the Body (v.13)**

**II. Every member has a <u>DISTINCT FUNCTION</u> in the Body (v.14-17)**

**III. Every member is placed by <u>DIVINE DESIGN</u> into the Body (v.18)**

**IV. Every member should be viewed as <u>NECESSARY</u> to the Body (v.19-25a)**

**V. Every member should be <u>CARED FOR</u> in the Body (v.25b-26)**

**VI. Every member should be <u>SATISFIED</u> with their particular gifts in the Body (v.27-30)**

Conclusion: v.31 & Ephesians 4:15-16 – Our Church Body will be Blessed & Edified if each Member does his/her Ministry out of Love for Christ and each other

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In FBC, it is amazing how different people are from each other. (different backgrounds, cultures, skin colors, languages, abilities, interests, etc.)

Just as your physical body is all tied (woven) together and yet has distinctively different body parts, so it is with the Body of Christ.

**** Each & every member must see his/her vital role in the Body of Christ!***

**I. Every member is united by <u>SPIRIT BAPTISM</u> into the Body (v.13)**

Scripture speaks of three baptisms:

1) Water (Mk. 1:4)

2) Death (Lk. 12:50; Mk. 10:38)

3) Spirit (Acts 1:5)

Proofs that Paul is speaking of Spirit baptism and <u>not water</u> in verse 13:

1. In context, Paul is describing how believers became one with Christ and each other -- this only occurs through Spirit baptism.

2. Paul includes himself (***"we"***), and he was <u>not</u> water-baptized at Corinth.

3. The end of v. 13 clarifies the thought by showing how all believers partake of the Holy Spirit.

4. Spirit baptism was a well-known doctrine, as it had been preached by John the Baptist (Mk. 1:8), promised by Jesus (Acts 1:8), experienced by Peter (Acts 2) and by others (including Gentiles - Acts 10:47), and was taught by Paul (Rom. 6; Eph. 4:5).

***"<u>All</u> baptized" -*** Not one child of God goes without Spirit baptism (Rom. 8:9).

***"One body" -*** It is this preacher's interpretation that Paul's reference to Christ's "Body" is a reference to the relationship all true believers, all over the world, have with Him. The Universal Church Body finds its physical outworking in local church bodies.

God calls for a concrete external response to this spiritual reality:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Belief | Spirit Baptism | Bodyof Christ |
| Testimony | Water Baptism | Local Church |

At salvation, a miracle of the Holy Spirit takes place, whereby He regenerates our hearts (Titus 3:5), adopts us into God's family via a second birth (John 3), comes to indwell our bodies (Jn. 14:17; I Cor. 6:19-20), and unites us to Jesus Christ and thus to everyone else who belongs to Christ.

The Spirit immerses (unites) every believer into a vital relationship with Christ, regardless of race or nationality (***"Jews or Gentiles"***), regardless of social status (***"bond or free"***).

Because it is the self-same Spirit who unites us into Christ's Body, there are no second-class, second-rate, lower-cast, or inferior believers.

Note: The work of ***"baptizing"*** and ***"drinking"*** is a work of God. He actively did it; we passively received it.

## II. Every member has a DISTINCT FUNCTION in the Body (v.14-17)

**V. 14**

Your physical body has literally thousands of distinct parts, each performing a different function.

**V. 15-16**

Rhetorical questions expecting a "NO" answer.

**V. 15**

A ***"foot"*** may not be as attractive as a ***"hand"*** but it is vitally needed (as it does a job the hand cannot). [When was the last time you saw someone walk to church standing on his hands??]

**V. 16**

An ***"ear"*** may not be as pretty as an ***"eye"*** but it is vitally needed (as it does a job the eye cannot).

It is infantile (immature) for you to pout about not being the ***"eye."***

"Imagine, if you can, an ear saying, "No one ever looks longingly into me and comments on how beautiful I am, like they do the eyes. I will seek to be an eye." So the poor ear fasts and prays, prostrates itself, pours out its wax, seeking to be an eye. How ridiculous!" (Gardiner, The Corinthian Catastrophe, p. 26-27).

**V. 17**

Each part of the face experiences life through a different sense (eye sees, ear ears, nose smells, tongue tastes, cheeks feel).

Not everyone in the church body can do the same thing. If we all did the same thing, we wouldn't need each other. The body would be limited, single-faceted, and single-dimensional.

We should never be jealous or envious over the giftedness of another believer. Rather, we should praise God for the role he/she plays in the big picture of Christ's body.

Each part must contribute. If you refuse to function because of fear, pride, "inability," etc., the whole body suffers.

## III. Every member is placed by DIVINE DESIGN into the Body (v.18)

Just as God is the Designer and Builder of your physical body (Ps. 139:13-16), so He is the Designer and Builder of the Body of Christ. He sovereignly places each part into Christ's church body and equips and enables each part to do its job.

***"Every one of them" -*** Not one member of Christ is without design and purpose. You are no accident, after-thought, or mistake. You have been saved and placed into a ministry by God!

***"As it hath pleased Him" -*** We were designed and gifted for God's pleasure, not selfish pursuits. All that we are and have is because of Him (cp. v. 11). We should not seek gifts we were not given, rather we should use the ones we have! And use them so as to please God.

With ability comes responsibility. *"Much given...much is required."*

## IV. Every member should be viewed as <u>NECESSARY</u> to the Body (v.19-25a)

**V. 19**

If every believer did the same thing, the church would not be a body, it would be a blob.

**V. 20**

The church is diversity in unity. Diverse parts functioning as one man.

**V. 21**

Each part of the body is needed and beneficial to the rest.

The eye helps guide the hand, and the hand removes dirt from the eye.

The head sends directions to the feet, and the feet carry the head.

My feet haven't yet learned how to type, nor can I hold a fork and eat with them; however, my hands can't support the weight of my body, nor can I run and kick with them.

**V. 22**

***"Feeble" -*** to be weaker, less strong.

My forearm muscles may not be as strong as my biceps, but they are just as vital, perhaps more vital.

Some Christians may tend to have more areas of weakness than you, but they are just as necessary to the body as you are!

**WHO MX??**

> Xvxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works wxll xxcxpt for onx kxy. Thxrx arx forty-six kxys that function, but just onx not working makxs thx diffxrxncx. Somxtimxs it sxxms that a church is likx my typxwritxr--that not all thx kxys arx working propxrly. You may say, "Wxll, I'm only onx pxrson; I don't makx or brxak a church." But a succxssful church, to bx xffxctivx, rxquirxs thx activx participation of xvxry mxmbxr. So thx nxxt timx you think that your xfforts arx not nxxdxd, rxmxmbxr my old typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I am vxry valuablx to my church and I am nxxdxd vxry much! For thx church to succxxd, I must do my vxry bxst!"

**V. 23**

Often the hidden organs or the body parts which are beneath the surface are the most valuable (EX: heart, liver, kidneys, lungs). We tend to spend a lot of time on our face and hair; yet you can live without hair.

Key Words: ***"Seem to be"*** (v. 22) . . . ***"We think"*** (v. 23).

Man may not think much of a "handicapped" Christian, but God sees the true strength and He knows the true value of each one.

**V. 24**

When some part of Christ's body lacks something, others come to that part's <u>aid</u> and give assistance, thus showering honor on that member.

**V. 25**

Often schisms (divisions) occur in a church body when certain parts which need attention don't get it (EX: Acts 6).

Weaknesses and areas of need actually have a way of drawing people together. God allows needs to arise so that the body can rally together, come to the rescue and unite in helping that area of need.

**V. Every member should be <u>CARED FOR</u> in the Body (v.25b-26)**

**V. 25**

When crisis hits or needs arise, such calamities provide an occasion (opportunity) for love to be manifested (Phil. 4:10 - *"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that not at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.")*.

***"One for another" -*** The care should be reciprocal. Something is deeply wrong when someone is always on the receiving end.

**V. 26**

Because of the inter-connectedness of the Body, one parts' misery is shared by all. (EX: stubbing a small toe can produce a tension headache, add stress to other muscles that have to make up for the loss of that one member).

If we really understood how much we are one body with each other, we would *"rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"* (Rom. 12:15). If a team wins, the whole team wins; if it loses, the entire team loses.

## VI. Every member should be SATISFIED with their particular gifts in the Body (v.27-30)

EX: Michael Jordan -- should have stuck to basketball and not diverted to baseball, which wasn't his gift.

**V. 27**

***"Ye are the body of Christ" -*** We are called *"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."* (Eph. 5:30)

**V. 28**

***"God hath set..."*** - God determines both one's office and gift.

***"First...secondarily...thirdly" -*** The first are ranked in order of honor (Ryrie). Note: Tongues is ranked last.

Note: The reason why miraculous sign gifts are given in the same list is because they all came from the same source - God! This does not prove that all gifts are operative today.

**V. 29-30**

Rhetorical questions expecting a "NO" answer.

Note: Even when the sign gift of tongues was given, not all believers spoke it; but all were Spirit-baptized (v. 13).

Paul's over-all point is this: Don't seek tongues or some other flashy, noticeable, sensational gift. Be satisfied with what God made you and gave you.

Conclusion: v.31

***"Covet earnestly" -*** Could be translated by the present tense as a statement of fact "You are coveting earnestly" (Bittlinger, cited by Gardiner, p. 28); or by imperative as KJV - in which case Paul is evidently speaking sarcastically - "You go ahead and covet...but I will now show you what you should be seeking after" (namely, Love - chapter 13).

Are you a team player? Are you a living, functioning part of a body of believers? Will you be missed by the body when God calls you home? Are you contributing in the area of your giftedness?

This is a true statement: "It takes all kinds."