

1 Corinthians 12:12-31
What Did the Eye Say to the Ear?

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31 ESV)

There are differences in roles, in service, and in gifts in the church, but everyone is necessary. God has so ordered the church and distributed gifts that there will be no division, but that we will need and have love for each person.

I. Many Parts to One Body (vv.12-14)

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (1 Corinthians 6:15-17 ESV)

The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:16-17 ESV)

...husbands should love their 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 Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. (Ephesians 5:28-30 ESV)

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:27-28 ESV)

II. A Perceived Inferiority (vv. 15-20)

III. A Perceived Superiority (vv. 21-27)

IV. Pursue the Better (vv. 28-31)

... the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation... so that all may learn and all be encouraged, (1 Corinthians 14:3, 31 ESV)

“the proclamation of revealed truth in relation to a pastoral situation.” (Thistleton)

“men endowed with extraordinary wisdom and aptitude for grasping what the immediate need of the church is and speaking the right word to meet it.” (Calvin)

“Paul indicates that any believer could prophesy, evidently those who did so on a regular basis came to be known as prophets...[they were able to communicate] the divine will, [and] the predicting of future events was a secondary and non-essential feature.” (Ciampa, Rosner)

2 Truths and 4 Questions:

1. What you do affects the whole body.
2. God has equipped each part for the good of the whole.
 - A. What do I need to start doing that will help others grow?
 - B. What do I need to stop doing that will help others grow?
 - C. Who has God placed on my heart in recent days?
 - D. Do you know Jesus as God and Savior?

