

**Many Members in One Body**  
**Romans 12:4-6a**  
March 2, 2022

**Context**

*Theme of Romans:* The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 1-11      The gospel as the power of God for salvation – The indicatives

12:1-15:13    The gospel and the transformation of life – The imperatives

- 12:1-2      Consecration
- 12:3-8      Humble service
- 12:9-21     Love

15:14-16:27   Conclusion

**1. We are many members in one body (4-5)**

**4 “For”**

- Connects back to the instruction in humility and thinking of ourselves “according to the measure of faith that God has assigned” (**verse 3**)

**verse 4**

- The human body is used as an analogy

**verse 5**

Concerns the church universal, and is manifested in local churches

“one body in Christ”

- All believers compose one body by virtue of our common union with Christ, our Head

“individually members one of another”

- God has sovereignly arranged the members in the body so that we are interrelated and interdependent
  - **1 Cor. 12:18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

Verses 4 and 5 emphasize both the unity and diversity of the church

1. “one body”
2. “many members” who do not all have the same function
3. A mark of God’s sovereign and marvelous handiwork

Every member of Christ's body has a necessary function to perform in the body

1. Every member's gift is necessary for the proper function of the body as a whole
2. No matter how obvious a member's function is to the rest of the body (as in the case of a hand), or how discreet (as in the case of a small blood vessel)
3. Only as all the diverse members of Christ's body work in unity and harmony, can Christ's body do what He has directed it to do

*Question:* What attitudes do verses 4-5 teach us to have as we serve in the church? Explain.

## **2. We are to use our grace-gifts (6a)**

God purposefully does not give us all the same gifts

Our gifts are not arbitrary

Our gifts differ NOT according to...

1. Merit
2. Effort
3. Natural ability

Our gifts differ according to God's grace

Every gift is the product of God's grace

"let us use them"

- The point of the list that follows

They are to be used NOT for self (verse 3).

Rather, they are to be used to...

1. build up the body of Christ
  - **1 Cor. 12:7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
  - **1 Cor. 14:12** ...since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.
  - **Eph. 4:15-16** ...we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
2. play our part in the church fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20)

Every believer has at least one gift

You do not have to know what your gift is in order to use it. But you must trust God's Word that you have been given one!

To follow the instruction in verse 6...

1. Be involved in the life of the local church
2. Get to know your brothers and sisters in the church
3. Seek to edify your brothers and sisters
4. Seek to play a role in the church's fulfillment of the Great Commission

At the same time, do not try to do everything in the church

### **Conclusion**

*Question:* What are some examples, from our life as a church, of how we are dependent on one another?

Paul Brand (biologist), *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*: "My body employs a bewildering zoo of cells, none of which individually resembles the larger body. Just so, Christ's Body comprises an unlikely assortment of humans. Unlikely is precisely the right word, for we are decidedly unlike one another and the One we follow.... The Body of Christ, like our own bodies, is composed of individual, unlike cells that are knit together to form one body. He is the whole thing, and the joy of the Body increases as individual cells realize they can be diverse without becoming isolated outposts."<sup>1</sup>

In the context of the same metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle states, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (12:27).

- As we use the gifts in harmony, we are in a sense Christ's hands, feet, voice, etc. on earth

The use of our diverse gifts in the one body of Christ is a Trinitarian matter

#### **1 Cor. 12:4-6**

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;  
and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone."

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<sup>1</sup> In John MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, 165.