

6. Helping Team Members Develop Their Oneness

As we study the New Testament, we see that God has given every Christian one or more spiritual gifts. However, no Christian has all of the gifts. This is one reason why it is so important for Christians to learn to work together as a team. Romans 12:4-5 says, “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” In these verses, we see several important principles:

- we have many members in one body
- we do not all have the same function
- we are a body with many different gifts and abilities
- we are one body in Christ
- we are dependent upon one another

First, we are many members in one body. Just like the human body has many different parts, the body of Christ has many different parts. Each part (person) needs to learn to function in the particular way Christ has equipped them to be the most effective. We could make a comparison to the human body. Some people could probably learn to get around by walking with their hands. However, they can probably walk much easier if they use their feet. In the same way, a Christian will be able to serve the Lord much more effectively if he or she learns to serve in the ways that the Holy Spirit has gifted the person.

Second, we see that we do not all have the same function or work to do. 1 Corinthians 12:16-18 says, “And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” God did not make you to do the same things that I do. As a result, I am not to tell you this is what you have to do. Instead, God specifically says that He has made us different. That is why I am to serve you and help you develop the gifts God has given you so that you can do the work that God has called you to do.

If you are a ministry team leader, all team members have different gifts God has given them so they can do the work God has called them to do. If you try to make them do the same things in the same way you do them, they will get discouraged and so will you. Instead, as you lead the team, you are showing them, by your character, what God wants them to be. At the same time, you serve them so that you help them develop their spiritual gifts, so they are equipped to do what God has called them to do.

One of the questions I often ask people is, “If you could do anything you wanted to do to serve the Lord for the rest of your life, what would get you more excited than anything else?” At that point, the person will often begin to tell me in an excited voice what he or she has dreamed about doing to serve the Lord. When the person finishes telling me what would get them excited, I follow with the question, “How can I best serve you to equip you to do the ministry that would really get you excited?”

Over the following months, as we spend time together, I try to regularly ask questions and share Biblical principles that will better equip them for that ministry. I also work to give the person every possible opportunity to do the ministry that gets them excited. As a team leader, one of my ministries is to serve the team members by helping them become better equipped for the ministry that really gets them excited. Usually, they get excited about that particular ministry because the Lord has given them both a passion for that ministry and the spiritual gifts to minister effectively in that area.

Third, we are a body with many different gifts and abilities. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*.” Here, we see that the Spirit gives us different gifts. Christ gives us different ministries. God gives us different ways to work. However, these are given for the profit of all, not for our personal profit. The very fact that we have different gifts, different ministries, and different ways of working means that all of the work of the Lord will get done as we do the things He has equipped each of us to do.

Here, we see another reason why it is so important to learn to work together as a team as we do the work of the Lord. We need the gifts and abilities the Lord has given others to complete the work the Lord has to be done, because we do not have all of the gifts and abilities that are needed to complete the ministry the Lord has to be done. As people with many different gifts work together, each one is able to do that part of the ministry the Lord has equipped us to do as a body. This is also the reason that no two churches will function the same way or carry out their ministry in exactly the same way.

Fourth, we see that we are one body in Christ. Christ is the One who is the head of the body. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” We are reminded that Christ is the One who is the head, not any one of us. Instead, we are the parts of the body. We are each like a joint that has something to supply to help the whole body function effectively.

In these verses, we also see that if every part learns to work effectively, the whole body will build itself up in love. It is the very fact that Christians are each doing their part to build up one another in love that causes the world to realize the radical change Christ makes in the lives of a group of people as they learn to yield to Christ and allow Christ to work through each part of the body. John 13:34-35 says, “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’” It is the love the world sees, as Christians learn to work together, that causes the world to recognize that we are the disciples of Christ.

Fifth, we are dependent upon one another. This reminds us of a very important thing. We really

do need each other, because none of us can do the work of the Lord by ourselves. There are three stages in the development of a healthy adult. As a child, that adult was dependent upon the parent. Then, the child became a young adult and became independent. However, life would cease to exist in one generation if everyone remained independent. Instead, it is normal for two adults to become interdependent and develop a new family to produce the next generation.

The same thing is true in our spiritual lives. We are dependent on others to help us grow when we first become Christians. Then, there comes a time when we are able to spiritually feed and continue our own growth. Finally, we learn to begin to function as an interdependent part of the body of Christ. This is the stage where we are able to help others, and also receive continuing help in our growth from others. At this point, we are learning to work as a team with many different gifts and abilities all working under the leadership of the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you as you function as a part of Christ's team and help others learn to function as a part of that team.