

Belonging to One Another

Week 2: A Body That Serves

Scripture:

Romans 12:3-6

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Romans 12:3-8 (ESV) **3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; **8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12 begins with an appeal.

Paul has spent 11 chapters laying out the gospel...

- The depth of human sin (Romans 1-3)
- The righteousness of God (Romans 4)
- The death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 5)
- The security and victory of those who are in Christ (Romans 6-8)
- The mercy of God toward Jew and Gentile alike (Romans 9-11)

Then he gives his appeal based on these things.

Everything Romans 12 asks of the church flows from **a life that has been surrendered to God**. Before *serving*, *loving*, and *belonging*, there is the offering of yourself.

This series, *Belonging to One Another*, is not a community-building strategy.

It is the natural shape of a church that has heard Romans 1–11.

Belonging to one another is not just *attending something* but *participating together* as one body with others.

So first, we must learn what it means to give ourselves completely to God for His purpose and use.

Information (What You Need to Know):

3 Perspectives Every Christian Needs

1. Think Humbly About Yourself

Romans 12:3 (ESV) 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Grace is the Reminder - It is what we received from God for our salvation - **Saving Grace** - God accepting us through simple faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins not because we could earn it. Or I am some sort of superstar. We all stand before God empty-handed needing His love and forgiveness. I am a deeply broken flawed man who stands before God because He loved me. He called me. He died and rose paying the debt for my sin. He claimed victory for ME. On the other hand we also need - **Grace Daily** - God giving us the strength every day to do what we cannot do on our own. Whether kindness, loving our neighbor, the strength to say no to our flesh and temptations, patience, the ability to go through what would normally crush and break people (mental, physical, emotional traumas). It is God's power at work in your life right now. Again, not earned but abundantly given by a loving heavenly Father.

Grace reminds us to be HUMBLE: Because it reminds us no one is worthy to stand before our Holy God. It is not because I look or act a certain way. I did not have my act together. Nothing I could ever do in my sin could ever garner or gain God's attention. So you and I are called **to sober judgement** (reality check). We are here not because of anything in ourselves but because of God. I don't know why, but he loved me. But I am so thankful. My pathway was like a speeding car destined for a wreck.

Paul goes further. Humility, sober judgement **each according to the measure of faith that God gives/assigns**. *What does Paul mean here?* Our estimation of our selves is not some subjective feeling that changes day in and day out. We need to estimate ourselves based on the standard of Christ. *How do we do that?* When Christ is our standard of measure we do not think of ourselves more highly than we

should. Take Jesus' word in **Matthew 5:3** - "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Or as Kent Hughes put it, "**Happy are those who realize that they have nothing within themselves to commend themselves to God, for theirs is the kingdom of God.**" So, no exulting ourselves or comparing ourselves to others in the church. This puts everyone on level ground. This helps with our next perspective. When we think humbly about ourselves this helps us to think correctly about our church family. So, let's keep reading...

2. Think Collectively about the Church

Romans 12:4-5 (ESV) For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Before we jump into these two verses let's remember Paul also gave us **Philippians 2:3 (ESV)** 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but **in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** This is a wonderful additional perspective that Paul gives us that is vital to a growing church family and ties to how we should think humbly about ourselves.

As we think collectively about the church when we remember three things.

God's Desire for Unity, God's Blessing of Diversity, and Our Need for Mutuality.

God's Desire for Unity - This in our individualistic society is important for us to grasp. Verse 5 says we are **one body in Christ, members one of another.** This idea of unit is so important that Christ prayed about it repeatedly in his prayer in John 17.

v. 11 - that believers would be one as God and Jesus are one

v. 21 - believers united so the watching world will believe in God

v. 22 - believers would be one as he and the father are one because of the father's glory

v.23 - we would be perfectly one (complete unity) so the world would know that God sent Jesus and he loves believers as he loves Jesus

John 10 - I am the Good Shepherd - One flock under one shepherd

John 15 - I am the vine you are the branches that need to stay connected to the vine

This is not to mention the dozens of times Paul talked about it in his 13 letters.

Finishing the verse in **Philippians 2:3-4** where he gives us a sort of formula for unity - we mentioned, "Count others as more significant than yourselves. v. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others."

You want to bring unity to your home and church here is Paul's guide:

1. Stop trying to get your own way
2. Stop acting like you are better than others
3. Consider others more important than yourself
4. Look out for the needs of others

Then Paul points to the ultimate example of humility - JESUS

God's Blessing of Diversity -

FF Bruce said,

Diversity, not uniformity, is the mark of God's handiwork. It is so in nature; it is so in grace, too, and nowhere more so than in the Christian community. Here are many men and women with the most diverse kinds of parentage, environment, temperament, and capacity. Not only so, but since they became Christians they have been endowed by God with a great variety of spiritual gifts as well. Yet because and by means of that diversity, all can co-operate for the good of the whole.

God glory is revealed in the diversity of His people. So, yes we measure ourselves by Christ's standards but we will be ourselves. When sects or groups begin wearing the same thing to signal they are on the same team to me is laughable. Same hairstyles, clothing brands, piercings, colors, banners. That is not diversity.

True diversity is found in the church. All age groups, men and women, all races and cultures, bankers, mechanics, engineers, chefs, tradesmen and women, artist, designers, doctors, teachers, janitors, farmers, abused, addicted, broken, poor, wealthy, disabled, singles, families, divorced, remarried, reunited, restored, the list goes on and on.

Where the Spirit of God is free to work there is unity and diversity.

Our Need for Mutuality - Simply put, we need one another. The church is not a place for Lone Rangers. I remember when I broke my foot and had my surgery. My body felt out of wack. It was hard to rest. I could not get comfortable. I felt useless and helpless.

The church is at its best when the whole body is pitching in and using their gifts and talents to serve one another and the community. The church needs everyone doing their part. No, yea I'll volunteer but will always call off or forget or never show up.

That taxes and stresses the rest of the body. That is why this all begins with a humble estimation of ourselves.

The other thing we learn about the church and or the body of Christ there are no loose body parts. Hands or toes just sitting around or in multiple bodies. Believers are supposed to be connected to a local body using their gifts to bless the body as a whole. That particular body works together to bless and transform the community they are placed in. And good Christ - centered churches love one another and work together for God's good and His glory. Interdependence and Responsibility to use gifts for God.

3. Think Faithfully about Your Gifts

Romans 12:6-8 (ESV) Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul's List Here is Not Exhaustive. If you are looking for more of the lists you can look at I Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-28; Ephesians 4:11. I don't think what we have in the New Testament is even exhaustive. I also learn more toward what is known as SHAPE - How God formed you to serve Him.

Think JOSEPH - All God walked with him through to prepare him to be 2nd in command in Egypt.

S- Spiritual Gifts - as we see identified in the Bible

H- Heart - Things you are passionate about

A- Abilities - Natural Gifts and Talents

P- Personality - Some are people persons and some are not

E- Experiences - mechanic, trades, teaching, numbers, organizational training,

Paul's point here is not creating an exhaustive list.

2. **Every Believer has at Least One Gift.** No one who has trusted in Christ is left out. Each person has a gift. Our point today is not to walk through the gifts but to encourage and prod folks forward. If you want to look at the gifts you can do to our series on I Corinthians - Week 11 and take a look at Pastor Nolan's great message on Chapter 12.

3. **Every Believer is Expected to be Involved in their Local Church.** - There may be a period of time where you are getting to know the church but the logical step is finding your place and being part of the team.

His point is we do not simply do our jobs, have a family and attend church. There is an expectation that if you have gifts, training, experience that you utilize them to bless the church. He says, “let us use them.” The gifts. And if you do use them, give God or the church your best. And if you don’t know then consider taking a spiritual gifts test right on our website. thesummit.life/spiritualgifts - If you still have questions reach out to us!

Application (What You Need to Do):

As we head home we need to continually remind ourselves. It is not about me. It is about serving God and our church family. Because we need each other!

If you have been part of this church for years and have never served, I want to say this gently and clearly: you have been receiving from a body you have not contributed to. Romans 12 does not allow for that — not because the church needs your labor, though it does, but because your discipleship needs the giving. You were not made to consume the body of Christ. You were made to be a member of it.

We have a **Volunteer Rush** coming — actually two. Kids Ministry will have its own Sunday on August 2, and every other ministry of this church will be here on August 9. That gives you three weeks to pray about the first opportunity and four weeks to pray about the second. Not “what would I enjoy” but “where could I be useful”. There is a difference.