

More Than Members

Ephesians 4:12b–13 | April 12, 2026

What does it mean to be part of the church — really part of it? Not just attending, not just having your name on a list, but actually contributing to something being built. Ephesians 4:12b–13 provides the answer. Paul is saying: God isn't gathering a crowd. He's building something. The question isn't, are you showing up? The question is, are you a building block? And if the answer is yes, then you're not just a member — you're structure. The only question left is whether you'll live like it.

I. We're Built Up, Not Just Gathered

A. Ephesians 4:12b: ...for the building up of the body of Christ.

1. Paul doesn't say the church is gathered. He says it's *built up*. That's construction language. Active. Structural. Every piece has a job.
2. In a building, no piece is neutral. Every member either adds to what God is constructing or leaves a gap where something was supposed to be.

a) *Ephesians 2:21–22: The whole building, being put together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. You are also being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.*

B. This changes how we think about belonging.

1. Passive membership — showing up, staying on the edges, never really connecting — isn't harmless.
 - a) It's a missing piece. The body is weaker for it.
2. God isn't gathering a crowd. He's building a dwelling place.
 - a) The question isn't *are you present?* The question is, *are you load-bearing?*

II. The Goal Is a Measuring Stick Named Jesus

A. Ephesians 4:13: ...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

1. Three phrases. Each one matters.
2. "Unity in the faith" — not uniformity. A shared anchor. A common center in Christ.
 - a) We're all holding the same rope, even when we're pulling from different angles.
3. "Knowledge of the Son of God" — not information about him. *Epignosis*. Deep, relational, life-changing knowledge. The kind that comes from time and transforms how you live on a Tuesday.

B. The standard isn't each other.

1. "Maturity measured by Christ's fullness" — the measuring stick is Jesus. His fullness. His character. His completeness.
 - a) *Colossians 1:28: We proclaim him... so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*
2. None of us are close. Not the most faithful person in the room. Not the one who's been a Christian the longest.
 - a) Which means nobody has graduated. But it also means nobody is competing. We're all just growing — together — toward the same target.

III. Growth Happens Together or Not At All

A. The stature Paul describes in verse 13 isn't achievable in isolation.

1. A hand doesn't grow by leaving the body — it dies.
2. "Solo growth" is often just isolation dressed up as discipline.

a) Hebrews 10:24–25: Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another.

B. The friction is the point.

1. The conversation that challenges an assumption. The relationship that's harder than you expected. The staying when it costs you something.

a) Ephesians 4:16: ...the whole body... promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.

2. Every. Individual. Part. Not the leaders. Not the committed few. Each part.

a) Growth isn't something that happens to you while you sit still. It happens through you, around you, and because of you — when you're genuinely in this together.

IV. As We Close...

A. Three kinds of people in this room today.

B. Those on the edges: the next step is moving inside. Connect in a way that costs you something.

Those staying in something hard: that's load-bearing work. Don't quit.

Those holding back until they're "ready": the body needs the actual version of you today.

C. Keep your eyes on the right measuring stick. Not each other. Christ. His fullness. His stature.

a) Philippians 1:6: He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

D. The body is being built. You are either a building block or a missing piece.

The only question left is which one you'll be.