



### **Day twenty-eight**

For the next 40 days we are offering us all a challenge to consider 40 things that are sucking the life out of us. The challenge is to examine these and through confronting God's word, his Spirit, and his community of faith as we seek to be filled with his life and his love again. At the conclusion of each challenge there will be an opportunity to engage about this with another person and/or the larger community.

Today the thing we are asking us to explore giving up is:

## **disunity**

### **Confronting the text**

*"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it,"*(1 Cor. 12:27).

### **Confronting myself with God**

An important phrase used to describe the church by the Apostle Paul is "*soma Christou*." The body of Christ.

The phrase draws an analogy between the church and the human body . . . "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it,"*(1 Cor. 12:27).

Just as the parts of the human body cannot live independently of one another, so we church members are connected to one another . . . "*the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God,"* (Col. 2:19).

The ligaments which hold the body together consist of our personal relationships with one another, our commitment to one another, and our heartfelt love for one another.

Christ is to be the head, the directing force of the Body (Col. 2:19) and of every member of the Body . . . "*the head of every man is Christ,*" (1 Cor. 11:3).

Through the Holy Spirit, Christ directs each member of the Body in a coordinated fashion and moves the Body as a whole. God has a specific plan for every church, and we must listen for his direction in all our deliberations and activities.

Just as the physical body can become diseased, so the Body of Christ can become sick and ineffective. When a person's spinal cord is severed, the body no longer responds to the head.

We call that paralysis.

When the church no longer listens for the direction of Christ through the Spirit, it experiences a spiritual paralysis.

When a cell of the body moves and multiplies at will without regard for the rest of the physical body or the direction of the head, we call that cancer.

When a member of the church moves independently in his/her own direction without any regard for authority in the Body, it is spiritual cancer.

When the physical body loses a member, we call it amputation.

When a member removes himself/herself from the body of Christ, it is a spiritual amputation.

The member suffers but the Body suffers as well . . . "*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together*" (1 Cor. 12:26).

### **Listening to God's people**

The Body of Christ is healthy when:

1. Each member is clear about his/her own specific gifts and is functioning fully in them. (Romans 12:6)

What are my gifts?

2. Each member is responsive to the Head, that is, to the will of Christ in their lives rather than their own will, opinions, and purposes. (Romans 12:2)

How am I listening to Christ as it regards WestPres?

3. Each member is firmly connected to other members which makes work by the Body possible by alleviating fear that a finger might fall off (quit) if the hand tries to pick up something heavy (ministry). (Ephesians 4:16)

How have I let my fellow members and parts of Christ's and my body down?

4. Each member trusts the gifts in others rather than trying to perform all the functions of other members him/herself. (Romans 12:3)

What am I doing that someone else should be doing?

5. Each member recognizes his/her positive or negative impact on the rest of the Body and that irresponsible actions and unhealthy attitudes hurt the entire Body. (I Corinthians 12:26)

What attitude do I need to confess and which do I need to cultivate?