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### The Believer's Function in Fellowship #8

The belief that God has save any person just to keep them out of hell is a great mistake.

The purposes of God are far more efficient than that, in fact He saved each of us for function in the body of the Church according to his sovereign purposes.

1. Only you can know what God wants you to do as you fit in the body of the church.
2. When I and my brother got saved, we knew we were called to be used in the church.

Webster's dictionary defines function as, "The natural or proper action for which a person, office, mechanism or organ is fitted or employed".

\* Look at the parts of your body fit perfectly by design and so is each person saved.

Every believer in Christ needs to understand his or her function in the fellowship of the body of Christ.

\* It is easier to guide a moving object, than one that s standing still!

Paul the apostle knew and understood his call and function as an apostle to the Gentiles, prophet, evangelist and Pastor-teacher, therefore he

declared, "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel". 1Cor. 9:16d

\* The key is to do only what calls you to do and He will enables us, if I over-commit myself then I won't be able to do it!

There are three things we want to note regarding the believer's function in fellowship.

- I. The believer's function is essential to the life of the body.
- II. The believer's function is dependent on the gifted men of the body.
- III. The believer's function is enhanced by spiritual gifts given to the body.

#### **I. The believer's function is essential to the life of the body.**

A. Because the body is one but it is comprised of many members. 1Cor. 12:12, 14

1. The corporate body is one.
  - \* Jesus has only one church!
2. The corporate members are many.
  - a. All the members equal the body.
  - b. This is like the axiom in geometry that states, "the whole is equal to the sum of its parts".

B. Because every believer is inter-dependent, we need one another. 1Cor. 12:15-17

1. No one member of the body wishing he were another member of the body honors his call and gifts in the body.
2. No one member of the body can say to another member of the body, “I am not of the body or I have no need of you”, for diversity is for the efficiency of the whole body.
3. No one member can be excluded or it will be lacking it’s wholeness.
  - \* Can you imagine a woman going in to deliver her baby and the doctor comes out and says to the father, “Congratulations, you are the father of a foot”, no, the baby has many parts that comprise the baby!

C. Because God has set each member in the body as it pleases Him. 1Cor. 12:18

1. He is God.
  - \* He is all knowing, all present and all wise.
2. He is sovereign.
  - \* He can do as He will, when He wills, to who He will, as often as He will!
3. He is the One Who chooses.
  - \* He never makes a mistake!

D. Because there is no believer that is insignificant. 1Cor. 12:22-25

1. The weaker members of the body are more necessary. vs. 22
  - a. Take your bicep, or shoulders muscles, they are strong.
  - b. But your spleen or liver in comparison are weak but more necessary.
  - c. And so with some members of the body by God’s choosing.
2. The parts we think to be less honorable and unseen have greater honor. vs. 23
  - a. Have you ever had anyone say to you, “Hey you have some good –looking pituitary glands?”
  - b. You can live without a hand or eye but you can not live without your pituitary glan.
3. The seen parts are less modest and at times not as vital yet important and necessary parts of the body. Vs. 24
  - a. Like your face versus your heart.
  - b. So with someone who is always visible in their service and one who is unseen praying for the body.
  - c. It is not a matter of exalting one over the other but recognizing the need of every part.
4. The greater honor is given to the parts that lack and God composed the body as such, in order that there be no schism in

the body but great care for one another.  
Vs. 25

- a. Each doing its part to enhance and complement the other parts, unity is magnified by diversity.
- b. When is the last time your foot served itself or your hand, all of our body parts serve the other parts, not themselves. So its to be in the church?

E. Because every believer is inter-related, we affect one another. 1Cor. 12:26

- 1. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.
  - a. If I am lazy or irresponsible with my gift of teaching, it affects the body.
  - b. If the foot is not functioning, it will hinder the rest of the body.
    - \* When my father had his stroke, he was unable to communicate clearly and his left side was paralyzed. I know it was frustrating for him.
- 2. If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.
  - a. The church is not like the world in competition.
  - b. The church is an upside-down pyramid, serving all.

### Illustration

The believer's function in the body is essential to the life of the body, for just as a physical body would be handicapped if one of the members were paralyzed or non-functional, so in the church, the other members of the body of Christ are hindered.  
\* The other parts have to make up and compensate for the lack of the lacking part!

*The believer's function is essential to the life of the body!*

### **II. The believer's function is dependent on the gifted men of the body.**

- A. Because they were given by God to equip the saints for the function of ministry. Eph. 4:12a
  - 1. The concept of equipping implies to teach, train and opportunity to be used.
    - a. You need instruction and exercise.
    - b. Not mere head knowledge.
  - 2. The ministry means simply serving and comes from the root word which gives us our word "deacon", describing a waiter on tables.
    - \* The word is used of Martha who was distracted with much "serving" and for "service" to the church of Thyatira. Lk. 10:40, Rev. 2:19c
  - 3. The saints are to do the work of ministry, not the gifted men exclusively.

- a. There is no article before the word “ministry”, therefore it is not limited nor confined to the men in verse eleven.
    - 1) If I as pastor did everything, I would not be able to feed the flock.
    - 2) Every person makes ministry more efficient.
  - b. The men described in the verse will be doing ministry according to their gifts and calling in order to equip the entire body of the church to be involved in doing ministry.
    - 1) Not through programs.
    - 2) Not through carnal means and methods.
      - \* Are you so foolish? Having **begun** in the **Spirit**, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” Gal. 3:3
- B.** Because the believer’s function is to edify the body. Eph. 4:12b, 16
- 1. Service primarily is concerned and functions for the benefit and help of someone else, not oneself. vs. 12b
  - 2. Service is to be one minded.
    - a. We are inter-dependent, we need one another.

- b. We are inter-related, we affect one another.
  - 3. The result is growth and done through the motive of love. Vs. 16
    - a. The word “effective” means efficient, it accomplishes what it designed and purposed for.
    - b. The word “working: means to toil, every person is doing what they are called to by the energy of the Holy Spirit.
    - c. The word “love” is God's agape love not man's natural love, the only motive that God honors. Jn. 13:35, 1Cor. 13:1-3, Col. 3:14
- C.** Because the believer’s function is based on maturity. Eph. 4:13
- 1. The Christian life is a process.
    - \* It is not a sprint but a marathon.
  - 2. The Christian life is based on the knowledge of the Son of God.
    - \* You should go through the Bible at least once a year on your own, not including concentrated study.
  - 3. The Christian is to grow to the fullness of the stature of Christ, the sum qualities which make up Christ, what He is, in order to give Christ-like service.

- a. John the Baptist said, “I must decrease and He must increase”. Jn. 3:30
  - b. Christ has not called me to imitate Him but to allow Him to live through me! Gal. 2:20
  - c. The greatest privilege is not to be a container of God but a channel of God to others.
- D.** Because the believer’s function can be hindered by false teaching. Eph. 4:14
- 1. We were all children tossed to and fro with whatever wind of doctrine before coming to Christ but knowing God’s word prevents deception.
    - a. In religion, philosophy, etc.
    - b. We were in drugs, alcohol, etc
    - c. For the first time we saw our need of Christ when we heard the gospel. Eph. 2:1-2
  - 2. We possibly were one of these men waiting to deceive by trickery and cunning craftiness before we became Christians and there are others still out there deceiving.
    - a. Mormons as they peddle around with their false doctrine.
    - b. The Jehovah Witness who deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

The believer’s function that is dependent on the gifted men of the body is like a team dependent on the coaching staff. Though each player may know his position, each needs to know the function of the other team members as well as acknowledging the goal of team, for the purpose of effectiveness to accomplish the best and desired results.

*The believer’s function is dependent on the gifted men of the body!*

### **III. The believer’s function is enhanced by spiritual gifts given to the body.**

- A.** Because they are supernatural gifts given by God, not natural talents. Rom. 12:3-6-8
- 1. They are given by means of grace and a measure of faith given by God, therefore there can be no boasting. Vs. 3
    - a. Some teach that the gifts are no longer for today.
    - b. You can live without limbs but it will make life more difficult.
    - c. You may have a talent to play music but it does not mean you have the gift to lead worship.
  - 2. They are given to be used as God has gifted each person. Vs. 6-8
    - a. For the edification of the body.
    - b. For the glory of God.

### **Illustration**

- B.** Because in such a diversity unity is magnified and individual function benefits the entire body. 1Cor. 12:4-7
1. There are diversity of gifts but the same Holy Spirit. vs. 4  
\* 21 gifts are listed in the Scriptures.  
Rom. 12, 1Cor. 12-14, Eph. 4
  2. There are differences of ministries but the same Lord. Vs. 5  
\* Teaching, worship, evangelism, etc.
  3. There are diversities of activities but the same God, who works all in all. vs. 6  
\* The same gift can be exercised in different ways, such as evangelism.
  4. The Spirit's manifestation is given for the benefit of the entire body. Vs. 7  
\* There is at least one gift given to every person in the body of the church.  
1Pet. 4:10
- C.** Because spiritual gifts keep the believer dependent on God not self for the measure of faith. Rom. 12, 1Cor. 12
1. For through grace God has dealt to each one a measure of faith in order that we might think soberly with a level head.  
Rom. 12:3
  2. For it pleased God to sovereignly give as He sees fit. 1Cor. 12:18, 24
  3. For no one has all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1Cor. 12:22, 28-30  
\* Do not worship your Pastor!

### **Illustration**

The believer's function is enhanced by spiritual gifts given for the body much like the plays of a football team enhance their function for effectiveness to accomplish the desired goal.

*The believer's function is enhanced by spiritual gifts given to the body!*

### **Conclusion**

The believer's function in fellowship is of vital importance to the body of the church.

- I.** The believer's function is essential to the life of the body: Therefore be active member in the body!
- II.** The believer's function is dependent on the gifted men of the body: Therefore be equipped for the work of ministry!
- III.** The believer's function is enhanced by spiritual gifts given to the body: therefore do not neglect or abuse the gifts!