

Bible Study Group Notes

1 Corinthians 12.12-31

THE BIG PICTURE

In this passage, Paul describes the church as one body with many members. Christians are not joined to Christ as separate individuals. By the Spirit, we are joined to Christ, and therefore we are joined to one another.

Paul exposes two wrong ways to think about belonging. One says, "I don't belong." The other says, "I don't need you." Both are false. No Christian is unnecessary. No Christian is independent. God has arranged the members of the body as he chose.

So the church is not just a service we attend, or a group of people with similar interests. It is the body of Christ. God has not only given gifts to individual Christians. In Christ, he has given us to one another.

INVESTIGATE

Read 1 Corinthians 12.12-31.

1. In 12.12-13, what does Paul say about the *one body* and its *many members*? Where does this unity come from?
2. In 12.12, Paul says, "so it is with Christ." Why is that stronger than simply saying, "so it is with the church"?
3. In 12.15-16, why do the foot and the ear think they do not belong? What mistake are they making?
4. How does 12.18 answer someone who feels less visible, less gifted, or less useful?
5. In 12.21, why is it wrong for the eye or head to say, "I have no need of you"?
6. In 12.22-24, what does Paul say about the parts of the body that seem weaker or less honourable? What is surprising about that?
7. According to 12.25-27, what should happen when one member suffers or one member is honoured?

REFLECT & APPLY

8. Which voice do you recognise more in yourself: "I don't belong," or "I don't need you"? How does that show itself?
9. Where might comparison be shaping the way you think about your place in the church?
10. Are there ways in which being capable, busy, experienced, or responsible can make a Christian less willing to depend on others?
11. Who at St Peter's might seem weaker, quieter, less visible, or less able to contribute in obvious ways? How does Paul's teaching change the way we should value and care for them?
12. Verse 26 says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together." Where do we do this well? Where do we need to grow?
13. How does this passage challenge the question, "Did I get what I wanted from church?" What better question might it lead us to ask?
14. What is one practical way you could belong more deliberately to the body of Christ over the next month?

PRAY

- Thank God that, by his Spirit, he has joined us to Christ and to one another.
- Pray for those who feel they do not belong, that they would know they are valued members of Christ's body.
- Pray for those tempted to self-sufficiency, that they would receive help, prayer, correction, and encouragement from others.
- Ask God to make St Peter's a church where members notice one another, suffer together, rejoice together, and walk in the way of love.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for September are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.