

The Church Today (Part 5) The Function of the Church

(I Corinthians 12:12-26)

Introduction: We have been talking about the doctrine of "The Church Today". Now, God formed the church (the body of Christ) on the day of Pentecost (Ac.2) when He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell all believers and empower them for ministry. So, today we are going to talk about "*The Function of The Church*". How does God intend for the New Testament church to function and carry out the ministry that God has given to us? Paul addresses this subject in I Corinthians 12 and several other parts of the New Testament. But in I Corinthians 12 Paul is discussing the matter of spiritual gifts. (that which empowers us for ministry) The reason for this study is the church is the body of Christ on this earth. (v.27) Now that Jesus has gone back to heaven, He continues to do His work here on earth through a body, (The church) which is *the body of Christ*. So, to illustrate the function of the church and how the church is to minister, and how the church is to move, the apostle Paul uses an analogy between the church and the human body. In this passage, Paul gives us the recurring theme of "one body, many members". (So, as we consider the body let's begin with...)

I. The head of the body:

A. Every human body has a head –

1. When you look at the human body, the most prominent thing about the body, the preeminent thing over the body is the head.
2. So, also, when we talk about the body of Christ, we think about the head of the body.

B. The Body of Christ has ahead – Col. 1:18.

C. The head of the Body of Christ is singular. Eph. 1:22

This tells us whenever a church ceases to have as its head the Lord Jesus Christ, it may continue as a religious organization, but it ceases to be the church.

D. The head of the body of Christ is sovereign. *I mean by that, that all the orders and directives come from the head to the body, not the body to the head.* (Eph. 4:15; 5:23)

- a. So, when we ask what would or should the church do or be doing?
- b. All we need to do is find out what the head commanded us to do and carry out His directive.

Jesus doesn't have a different ministry today than He did when He walked on this earth. He said in Luke 19:10, "*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.*"

Christ has told us exactly what we are to do. *So, the function of the church is, "where the head leads, the body follows!"*

II. The health of the body:

A. Jesus was healthy in mind, body, and Spirit –

1. I believe that when Christ was here upon the earth that because of His obedience to God in every area of His life, He probably was a perfect

specimen of health.

2. We know He got hungry, tired, and thirsty. But I believe He took good care of Himself.

B. Jesus wants His body (the church) to be healthy too.

1. If a body is to be healthy certain things must take place.
 - a. Number one, the body must have food. (Without food and proper nutrition, we would die...)
 1. You and I need the milk of the Word and the meat of the Word.
 2. *And to get that milk and meat of the Word, you need to expose yourself to the study Word of God.*

- b. If a body is to be healthy, it needs exercise.
 1. Now, if the body of Christ is to be in shape, if it is to be strong, if it is to be healthy, then it must be a body that is exercised. (Js. 1:22)
 2. That means you must fulfill your function.

As a body the church has to do certain things. Its eyes must see, its voice must speak, its hands must lift, and its feet must walk. The body has to exercise.

- c. If a body is to be healthy it needs growth. There is something wrong with a body that does not grow.

The body of Christ is expected to grow *in understanding, spiritually, and in numbers.*

(Ac. 2:41-47)

We function best with proper diet, exercise, and growth.

III. The harmony of the body:

A. Jesus wanted all believers to experience unity in the body.

1. He prayed for it (Jn. 17:20-21)
2. He said our unity would convince the world of who Jesus is. (Jn. 17:22-23; 1 Pe. 4:14)

B. Now Paul preaches unity to the believers in the body.

1. Notice how many times the word "one" is used in reference to the body of Christ in this passage. (vv. 12, 13, 14, 20)
2. Notice the position of this unity. (Eph. 2:12-16,18; Rom. 10:12-13; 12:1-2) *We are all called out of the world and put in the body of Christ...*
 - a. Every member of the body has entered the body one way (the same way). How is that? (v.13)
 - b. Every member came into the body with a spiritual gift or gifts. We come into the body with something God-given (v.11)
 - c. Every member is essential to the body. You came into the body as a part of the body. God has given to this local body every member that it needs to do the work of Christ. (Eph 4:11-12.

If we want to be a biblical model New Testament church, God's plan is for every Christian to be a minister.

- d. Every member is equal within the body. (v.19)
 - a. *Everybody is somebody in the Lord's body!* (1 Cor. 12:7)
 - b. I need you and you need me. We are incomplete without each other.