

WE NEED EACH OTHER

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Message Study Guide

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Church doesn't always work out like God designed it. I think this little joke sums it up...

A Sunday School teacher at another church had her first graders write letters to God. Amanda wrote this. "Dear God, We had a good time at church today. Wish you could have been there."

Is God's presence really not present in some churches? It's true and can happen in any church. Can it really be church with out God? Of course not. Christ is the head of the church. Now, the head needs a body. Imagine a talking head with out a body – pretty scary. Now imagine a body with out a head – even scarier I think.

Just like Christ needs the body, the body needs Christ. The body also needs the body. We need each other to accomplish God's work.

Church isn't boring. It's life-giving.

A little girl was getting fidgety as the sermon droned on and on (of course, not our church). Finally, she leaned over to her Mother and said, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

Many of us felt that way about Church when we were younger. I know that many of us wanted to escape the churches we grew up in at times. We were like Washoe, the 15-year-old chimpanzee at the University of Oklahoma. Researchers there did some of the first experiments on primates and speech. Washoe was 15-years-old and they taught her to communicate using sign language. Over a long time, she learned 140 different signs. Washoe had a good life, by the researchers standards. She had a great room to sleep in. She was well fed. Every time she got ill a team of vet's descended on her to nurse her back to health. She had great exercise and lots of human interaction. The day came when the researchers wanted to get Washoe to conceptualize with language. They wanted her to express her own thoughts. They were not ready for her first sentence though. Over and over, she repeated a three word phrase, "Let me out. Let me out. Let me out."

Church is an amazing creation of God. He has no plan B. The Church is the means to accomplish God's plan throughout the earth.

Romans 12:5 NLT

⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

My left hand is a member of my body. So is my right hand. The right hand cannot direct the left hand and vice versa. But both hands can receive instruction from the head only. If one hand is connected to the head and the other hand is connected to the head, then it simply follows that our hands are going to submit one to another. They're not going to fight one another. Have you ever taken a part of your body for granted? You never know how much you need a part of your body until it doesn't function normally. Maybe you've broken a leg or an arm or had your eyes dilated. Maybe you have had a kidney infection or even a heart attack. It's amazing how the parts of the body you need but don't think about.

It's the same way in the Body of Christ - the Church. Who is the head of the body? The Lord Jesus Christ. Who are the members of the body? You and I. God put us in the Church together that we might have a spirit of submission in the fear of the Lord. Every person in the body of Christ is necessary to build the entire body of Christ. We truly need each other to complete God's work in the church. We must learn to function together – to cooperate.

Some people are the hands, others are the feet (others, when out of line, are the rear-ends – don't get mad at me, you know you were thinking it too). Some work in children's ministry, others prison ministry. Think about this. When a new family, with two small preschoolers, enters the church for the first time, the church has the opportunity to work together or separate. When they are greeted at the front door and walked to the preschool area, the greeters are working with the preschool team. When the preschool team helps the parents find the correct room, then turns around and introduces them to Life Group leaders, the preschool just served the Life Group ministry. When the Life Group leaders take the family out to eat and find out they are in need of some help in finances and get them Angel Food...you see my point?

Synergy is defined as the sum of the whole working together produces more than the individuals working separate. When we work together, we complete more of God's work.

QUESTION:

- 1. Is there someone in the Church with whom you're having difficulties? Submit yourself to the Lord and allow Him to give you grace to submit one to another.**
- 2. Are you actively working with the other ministries and members of the local church for the common good of building God's Kingdom?**

WE NEED FIVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. I need people who will walk with me.

Here is a quote:

“The Church is not a place where perfect people gather to say perfect things, or have perfect thoughts, or have perfect feelings. The Church is a place where imperfect people gather to provide encouragement, support, and service to each other. ... We are here with the same purpose: to learn to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.”

Hebrew 10:25 NLT

Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.

One of the highest duties that a Christian has is to encourage others. In a world filled with pessimism, violence and despair, our need for encouragement is great. It is all too easy to let the "ways of the wicked" become our ways. The happy man is the one who refuses to "stand in the path of sinners" or "sit in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).

It is truly a shame the Christians do not spend more time in each other's company. The Hebrew writer bids us to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). After the command, he tells us how it is to be accomplished, i.e., "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25).

1 Corinthians 14:26 Message

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation Let all things be done for edification.

1 Corinthians 14:30-31 Message

Ephesians 4:16 NLT

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Do you have people in your life that you know will "walk" with you through whatever comes your way?**
- 2. Are you someone who will "walk" with others through whatever comes their way?**
- 3. When was the last time you encouraged or edified someone?**
- 4. Do you look to edify or criticize first?**

2. I need people who will work with me.

Ephesians 2:10 NIV

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 NIV

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:

Galatians 6:10 Message

Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

When God gives us His Spirit, we become members of Christ's Body, His Church. He expects us, since we are members of His spiritual Body, to serve Him, to participate in its example to the world and its work of spreading the gospel. He also expects us to know, love and serve one another. He tells us, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

We can do this only if we are active participants in His work and service. The Scriptures say: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Christ expects the members of His Body to be actively working together, cooperating to accomplish the mission He gave His Church.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you a worker (giver) or a loafer (taker) in God's church?
2. Where are you serving in God's Church?
3. Who are you serving?
4. Has God been calling you to serve in a particular area? Have you been cooperative or resistant to His plea to serve?

3. I need people who will fight for me.

John 15:4-5 NIV

Deuteronomy 32:30 NIV

Philippians 2:4 NIV

Ecclesiastes 4:12 NLT

Philippians 1:27 NLT

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

Most of us like to think that we're strong enough to withstand such persecution. But truth be told, it's much easier to succumb to lesser pressures. It may be the discussion on politics that suddenly turns to a discussion of religion. Or perhaps it's in the science lab at school where the concept of a loving creator is mocked. What then? Are we silent? Or are we willing to step up and say what we believe and know to be true despite the ridicule? Paul says that it's a privilege to trust Christ, but also a privilege to suffer for him. Notice Paul encourages believers to stand side by side. Let's support and encourage each other to stand firm in our faith and fight for the king.

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you truly say that you consider opposition to your faith a privilege?
2. Can you think of times when you were ridiculed or suffered for your faith?
3. Do you know of others who you can trust that will stand with you in your faith?
4. Are you able to fight for your faith? Are you intimidated? Do you know how to fight the good fight?

4. I need people who will cry with me.

I Peter 3:8 NLT

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters.^[a] Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude.

I Corinthians 12:26 NIV

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

Romans 12:15 NIV

Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep.

I Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

We are not alone. God has given us each other to live our lives for him and get us back home to him. Along the way, we want to share each others burdens, soar on each others joys, and love each others hurts. There is no such thing as a solo Christian.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you compassionate towards other's needs or hurts?
2. Are you put out when someone asks you to help in another's troubles?
3. Is it easier for you to be happy with the happy or weep with those who weep?
4. **Why is sympathy sometimes difficult?**

5. I need people who will partner with me.

John 15:4-5 NIV

Deuteronomy 32:30 NIV says of God's army that "one will chase a thousand and two will chase ten thousand!"

If one chases a thousand, it would seem that two would chase two thousand. But the Lord is trying to tell us that there is multiplied effect in being together! Our power is multiplied when we worship and war together, rather than alone.

Philippians 1:27 NLT

QUESTIONS:

1. **Who are you partnering with? (hint: it is who you spend the most time and most intimate with. - i.e. family, ministry, baseball team)**
2. **Who have you parted with that you need to partner with again?**
3. **Can others partner with you or are you a "solo Christian"?**