

John 13:12-17 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Ephesians 4:10-13 ... train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.

Galatians 5:13-14 It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom.

Colossians 2:19 (MsgB) Christ is the Head and we are the body. We can grow up healthy in God only as he nourishes us.

Colossians 1:18 (MsgB) And when it comes to the church, Christ organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

1 Corinthians 12:13-18 (MsgB) We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which Christ has the final say in everything... Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink... I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together... As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

Romans 12:4-6 (MsgB) In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27 (MsgB) The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything.

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20/09/09 – BodyWork – Christ is the Head

CHRIST IS THE HEAD:

Colossians 2:19 (MsgB) Christ is the Head and we are the body.

1 Corinthians 12:13-18 (MsgB) We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which Christ has the final say in everything.

WE CAN TRUST HIM WITH OUR GIFTS & MINISTRY:

Colossians 1:18 (MsgB) And when it comes to the church, Christ organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

Galatians 5:23 (MsgB) We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, *not needing to force our way in life*, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

Matthew 23:12 (MsgB) If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty.

AT THE RIGHT TIME:

1 Peter 5:6 (NIV) Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV) Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

CONCLUSION:

Galatians 6:4-10 (MsgB)

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life. Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience... let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up or quit. 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.

11/10/09 BodyWork - Jesus & His Body

Ephesians 1:20-23 (MsgB) All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the centre of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Bill Hybels: I believe that the local church is the hope of the world.

Ephesians 3:10-11 (NLT) God's intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 5:25-30 (NIV) ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless... After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body.

Matthew 16:18 (MsgB) I will build my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

18/10/09 BodyWork – Many Gifts

1 Peter 4:10 (NLT) God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

Romans 12:6-8 (NLT) In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Wise advice	Healing the sick
Great faith	Proclamation
Power to perform miracles	Teaching
Ability to prophesy	Helping others
Aid to people in distress	Leadership
Wise counsel	Administration
Clear understanding	Pastoring
Simple trust	Serving
Encouraging	Contributing to the needs of others
Message of wisdom	Distinguishing between spirits
Showing mercy	Speaking in different kinds of tongues
Giving	Interpretation of tongues
Preaching	Message of special knowledge
Helping others	
Showing kindness	

1 Corinthians 14:1 (MsgB) Give yourselves to the gifts God gives you.

1 Corinthians 14:1 (NIV) Eagerly desire spiritual gifts.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

What gifts can you identify that you already have?
How are you currently using those gifts?

What gifts do you desire?
What is your motivation for wanting those gifts?
What can you do to pursue those gifts?

01/11/09 – BodyWork – Belonging to the Body

Romans 12:5 (NIV) in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member *belongs* to all the others.

Our culture encourages independence, self-actualisation, self-achievement, self-centredness. But the Bible says we belong *to each other*.

Philippians 2:4 (NIV) "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Colossians 3:15 (MsgB) Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT) You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.

Q: How do we feel about belonging to the body?

Jesus calls us to a life marked by giving not getting:

Mark 4:24 (MsgB) "Listen carefully to what I am saying and be wary of the shrewd advice that tells you how to get ahead in the world on your own. Giving, not getting, is the way.

Q: What is motivating our decisions: Self-interest or interest in others? Could it be that the most pressing question when we come to church is not, "what can I get from church today?" but "what can I give today?"

Galatians 5:13-17 (MsgB) It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows. For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom... My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day.

1 Cor. 12:13 (MsgB) By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which Christ has the final say in everything.

Ephesians 4:2 (MsgB) And mark that you do this with humility and discipline - not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love

08/11/09 – BodyWork – Sacrifice in the Body

John 15:13 (NLT) There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 12:24-25 (NIV) I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new seeds—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.

Philippians 2:17 (NASB) But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

Q: Do you feel part of something bigger than yourself that you'd be willing to sacrifice for?

Philippians 1: 20 (NIV) I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

15/11/09 – BodyWork – Suffering in the Body

(S) 1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Like Sacrifice, our culture tends to devalue suffering. Pain is bad. Take a pill. Anesthetise it.

As the Body of Christ, we are called to share in the sufferings of Christ. It is our daily martyrdom, our daily laying down our own life and embracing the cross.

Luke 9:23 (NIV) Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

(S) Philippians 1:29 (NIV) For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.

(S) Colossians 1:24-25 (MsgB) There's a lot of suffering to be entered into in this world—the kind of suffering Christ takes on. I welcome the chance to take my share in the church's part of that suffering. When I became a servant in this church, I experienced this suffering as a sheer gift, God's way of helping me serve you, laying out the whole truth.

(S) Colossians 1:24 (NIV) Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Is this a foreign language to you? Are you each day welcoming the opportunity to share in the church's suffering? Rejoicing in the opportunity to experience affliction?

We're singing songs thanking Jesus for the opportunity to believe in him, but are we thanking him for the opportunity to suffer for him?

(S) 1 Peter 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

(S) 2 Timothy 3:11 everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

(S) 1 Peter 1: 6-7 (NIV) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

All kinds of trials – not just persecution for faith.
Refines our faith – tests it to strengthen it and ensure it is genuine.

Phil 3:10-11 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Q: Is your suffering sanctifying you or scarring you?