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Get Connected

When you invited Jesus into your life, you became a part of God's family! When we are joined together with other believers who are growing in Christ, we encourage one another and help one another stay focused on our mutual faith. It doesn't matter what color your skin is; how smart you are; what kind of job you have; if you are a man, woman, teenager, or child; or how much money or stuff you have ...you are part of the family of God. And you need to get to know the other members of your family!

“So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” —Ephesians 2:19-22

You, along with all other Christians of all time, make up what is known as the body of Christ, the Church. Jesus made a promise to you and me. When we come together, with Him as our focus ... He is there:

“For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them.” — Matthew 18:20

Q. Are there people in your circle of family, friends, or acquaintances that you know are believers in Jesus Christ?

Q. Where can you go or what can you do to connect with other believers?

Every part of the body of Christ is important. And every part is interrelated. 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. One of the main reasons many Christians live defeated lives is that they have isolated themselves from other believers. They think they can go it alone. That they can stay connected to Christ without being connected to His body, which is made up of other believers. It is important that you find a church or some type of group of Christians to connect with in order to grow in your relationship with God.

Throughout the New Testament of the Bible, Paul tells the early Christians that they are each vital “parts” of the “body of Christ.” The need to stay committed to God and to each other. The commitment of the early church was so strong, and their love for one another so great, that within three hundred years, Christianity spread throughout the entire Roman Empire. Those Christians truly changed their world for Christ!

Q. As you think about the commitment of the early Christians, how committed are you to other believers?

Q. What are you currently doing to develop relationships with other believers?

Every part of the body of Christ is important. And every part is interrelated.

Think about your personal, physical body for a moment ... every part has an important function and every part is interconnected.

Likewise, the body of Christ is also interconnected. There is a very important passage in the Bible that talks about this interconnectedness of the body of Christ. Read this passage and then write down what the Holy Spirit puts on your heart.

“For in fact the body is not a single member, but many. If the foot says, ‘Since I am not a hand, I am not part of the body,’ it does not lose its membership in the body because of that. And if the ear says, ‘Since I am not an eye, I am not part of the body,’ it does not lose its membership in the body because of that. If the whole body were an eye, what part would do the hearing? If the whole were an ear, what part would exercise the sense of smell? But as a matter of fact, God has placed each of the members in the body just as he decided. If they were all the same member, where would the body be? So now there are many members, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you,’ nor in turn can the head say to the foot, ‘I do not need you.’ On the contrary, those members that seem to be weaker are essential, and those members we consider less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our unpresentable members are clothed with dignity, but our presentable members do not need this. Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member, so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may have mutual concern for one another. If one member suffers, everyone suffers from it. If a member is honored, all rejoice with it. Now you are Christ’s body, and each of you is a member of it.” —1 Corinthians 12:14-27

Q. As you read this passage, What has the Holy Spirit impressed upon you?

Think about how this perspective keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. No matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

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. Our heavenly Father has given each one of us distinctive gifts that are needed in the body of Christ.

You are a part of 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. Some of the "parts" that God has formed in his Church, which is his "body" are: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, organizers, those who pray in tongues. But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete body and not a gigantic, unidimensional part? It's not all Apostle, not all prophet, not all miracle workers, not all healers, not all prayer in tongues, not all interpreters of tongues. And yet some sometimes we want to compete for so-called "important" parts.

Coming together with other believers in Christ's name is similar to hot coals, which keep each other hot when lumped together. However, a coal that is separated from the others will soon grow cold. Like logs burning in the fireplace when you separate them, the fire goes out. You need to be connected to other believers in order to be encouraged to continue your relationship with God and for you to encourage others! Each person is a unique creation of God. Our heavenly Father has given each one of us distinctive gifts that are needed in the body of Christ.

Refer back to the 1 Corinthians passage above:

Q. Who gave you your gifts?

Q. Which gift is most important?

Q. What are we warned against?

Q. What are we to do for others?

Satan is very clever in convincing many Christians that they are not important to Christ's work on earth. Many leave the job of doing God's work to those with gifts that are more obvious or appreciated. God's Word is clear that each gift is vital to his kingdom!

Application

Q. How can you become more connected to other believers?

Q. What special gifts do you have to share with the body of Christ?

Q. How can you learn more about the gifts God has given you?

Additional Study

You Were Made for More by Jim Cymbala. This book will help you come to a deeper understanding of the nature and character of God and how He works in the lives of His children. Some relate to God as a stern judge instead of as a loving Father. Some struggle with the idea that growing in faith entails doing more—more studying, more serving, more Bible reading. All you really need is a closer relationship with God—He'll do the rest!

In one way, your role in the church is similar to a player on a basketball, football, or soccer team. Unless each player uses his skill and talent to play, the game could be lost. To win, each player must do their own job well. As an important part of God's team, you need to play the position He has gifted you to play!