

Discipleship – A Life Long Journey

Week 3

Developing (Gifts and leadership)

I Corinthians 12

Part of discipleship is being useful and knowing how we fit into God's kingdom. All of us are gifted in some way.

1Co 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

1Co 12:5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

1Co 12:6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

1Co 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Let's have a quick look:

1. Lots of Gifts.
2. Lots of avenues for their use.
3. All are given by God
4. All are for the common good. That means they are useful to the church, the kingdom and community.

Interesting isn't it how we need to be reminded of this. There is lots of gifts, not just the ones I have, there are lots of ways to use them, not just what I can think of, All of them are given by God and all are for use for the wider bunch of people- it is not just for church use.

Notice that after saying that the author gives some practical example.

1Co 12:8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

1Co 12:9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

1Co 12:10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the

interpretation of tongues.

1Co 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

Notice: 1. Knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing spirits, tongues, interpretation. Different gifts but see v11

1Co 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

God distributes these attributes as He wills.

Now the author gives further teaching on how it works.

1Co 12:12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Just like a body, we all do different stuff and that is the way it is designed.

Not only do different stuff but have different passions. Some people are passionate about worship, others passionate about mission, others passionate about kid's ministry, other Youth Ministry, others prayer, others missions to far off places, others bible study, others sport ministry.

Now here is the thing, if we have people passionate about those things then we have a vibrant passionate church. Guess what – we just described our church. We have passionate people in all those areas and more.

The thing we have to do is release them to be passionate. Not expecting them to passionate about each others passion but letting them loose to their own passion and gifting.

Part of Christian maturity is recognizing others gifts and letting them use them as God designed them.

I love the next part of the passage.

1Co 12:13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

1Co 12:14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

It goes from saying we are all in this together and each has their part to play to saying it is the Spirit that ties us together.

V 13 - For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—

How should we read this?

Do we read it:

For in one body we were all participants in the ritual of baptism into one body.

Or

Do we read it

For in one body we were immersed into the one body.

Do you see what I am saying here Baptism means to immerse. Do we translate that word or give it some ritualistic connotation? I think I go with the immerse terminology, what about you?

But v14

1Co 12:14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

Now I don't know about you but this makes me think of bodies. I think that's the point. Hands, feet arms, legs, heads etc. All different.

What a fabulous metaphor for us to understand. This is so digestible, we get it. That's the thing with the bible, it is written in such a way so that we can get it.

Because we get the metaphor, we get the teaching.

1Co 12:15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

1Co 12:16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

1Co 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

1Co 12:18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

1Co 12:19 If all were a single member, where would the body be?

None of us are outside the body, none of us are more important, all are necessary and we can't be a different bit. We can't all be pastors, we can't all be worship leaders, we cant all elders or deacons, we cant all be kids church leaders and the list goes on. Why? Because each aspect is needed to make the church work. When ever someone says- "I don't want to do that" the body is affected. To use the metaphor - "Sometimes the church can't walk right because the person who is supposed to be the knee joint wants to be the eyeball."

And what's more, sometimes those with tough jobs get treated special - we put clothes on them.

1Co 12:20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

1Co 12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

1Co 12:22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

1Co 12:23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,

1Co 12:24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the

part that lacked it,

Just as we put clothes on certain parts of our bodies, we protect some of our gifted people. Sometimes we don't even tell others of their gifts. In past churches I have not shared who had the gift of tongues or interpretation as it would have caused issues. Was that deceptive? No, it was protecting them. They didn't choose the gift – God gave it to them. Gifts of discernment can be a bit the same. It can be a scary gift to have when you can tell what is happening in people's lives without them telling you. We are careful there. We cloth them and protect them.

The thing is we are in this together. We need each other more than we ever realise. Our culture is very individualistic yet for God's church to function in mission, ministry, outreach, governance and worship - we need each other. No arguments, no fights, no separations. Together.

1Co 12:25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

1Co 12:26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together

1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Notice that last verse. You are the body of Christ and individually members of it. You – yes that's you, so all that has been mentioned is about you. Gifted, useful to the church and God's kingdom – you. Yep.