

**Solitary Refinement**  
1 Corinthians 12:12-26  
**Week 6: Paul on being (a)part**

**Opening Question:** Which part of your body has suffered the worst injury? Or What's one muscle you didn't know you had until it started to hurt?

**Remind them:** This week pastor Michael talked about Paul on being both apart and a part of the body as he addressed the suffering of the body of Christ. He stressed the importance of having empathy and compassion for those of us who are hurting, as well as a need to acknowledge the source of that pain.

**Tell them:** The body of Christ is filled with all kinds of different people: different races, income levels and backgrounds. *Have you typically attended a diverse church body or a more homogenous one?*

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael read from 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 which explains life in the body of Christ, the church. Let's take a look:

*"<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>**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**. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 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. 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. 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? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, **God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose**. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 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." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup>which our more presentable parts do not require. **But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.**" (1 Corinthians 12:12–26, ESV)*

**Ask them:** *After looking at verses 12-13, what would you say makes us one body? What do we learn about the body in verses 18, 24 and 25?*

*Pastor Michael talked about his swollen ankle and how that has affected his whole body's daily life. When thinking about our church as a body of believers, what are some of the obstacles to all members suffering together when one member suffers? In other words, how can we better feel what others are feeling? What is the danger of not feeling when a part of the body is hurting (either your physical body or the church body?)*

## How to be a faithful part of the body

**Tell them:** Pastor Michael gave four ways that each of us can be a faithful part of the body.

Let's talk about those:

1. **Seek to understand what it's like to be a different part of the body than you are.** Be more aware of different members, their stories, and what they are going through even if you are not. If you can't relate, don't dismiss their experience but listen and learn about that different member.
2. **Hurt when others hurt, rejoice when others rejoice.** *How can we hurt when others hurt?*
  - a. Address the hurt.
  - b. Don't be more concerned with the reaction than with the pain others are feeling. For example: Don't first focus on the actions of the ankle when the ankle may be simply screaming for help in its suffering. Focus first on the cause of the suffering.

3. **Pursue justice and impartiality for all because it's commanded.**

**Tell them:** Let's read that passage again.

**Deuteronomy 16:18-20:** *"You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. **Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.**"*

- a. **Remind them:** *The Hebrew Bible translates verse 20 as "Justice, justice you shall pursue. What are the challenges in pursuing justice when the body is made of many members and backgrounds?"*
  - b. **Tell them:** Pastor Michael said, "If your outrage is more outrage over the response to injustice than to the injustice itself, you are missing the point." *What do you think of that statement?*
4. **Remember the sum of all commandments: Love God and love your neighbor.** This means do no wrong to a neighbor. *In what ways do these days of racial tension reveal how our neighbors are being done wrongly? Have you reached out to members of our body that are people of color to let them know you love them and are praying for them?*

**Pastor Michael said:** "We live with the fruits of rebellion in the US, (the Boston Tea Party being an example of the people's outrage over being heavily taxed by the King of England including the destruction of private property in protest) but God sent his son as our Savior telling us to give up our rights for others. Scripture is full of people giving up their rights for others. God had a wonderful purpose for Steven's life, to be stoned to death for God's glory. God had a wonderful purpose for Peter's life, to be stoned to death for God's glory. *What wonderful purpose might He have for you to give up your rights for others?*

**Encourage your group:** to keep this conversation alive. To be a diverse and healthy body, we must recognize the hurting parts of the body. One way to keep the conversation alive is on social media. So, here are some tweetable Quotes and things to ponder as we go:

1. "Seek to be one body that hurts when other members hurt."
2. "Seek to understand what it's like to be hurting. Don't first focus on the actions of the hurting when the hurting have been ignored and can't take it anymore."
3. "True selflessness does not happen without Christ."
4. "If your outrage is more outrage over the response to injustice than to the injustice itself, you are missing the point."