

iii) Will you take your place?

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Cor 12:27

'so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.' Romans 12:5



Very simply, do you believe that you have a part in the Body of Christ here?

If you're not sure what your part is will you pray, ask others. Sometimes we need to offer what we think we can and then the rest then becomes clear.

Will you take your place in helping the other members of this body at our church to grow? Will you love, pray, care and support them?

'Each member belongs to all the others', will you choose to belong to the others?

In our individualistic, time pressured world we can be worried of overcommitment and that can cause us to falter.

Just take it slowly and prayerfully, ask God for your own few next steps.

Maybe it's to get to know more people at church, or newer members, so that you know what to pray for. Maybe it's to offer to help in a small way or a new way.

Whatever your own next steps are, as you allow Christ the head to lead you will not be overwhelmed.

Rather you will grow in love for Him and for His beautiful church.

Pause for Personal Prayer



'Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it' - Pause to pray.

Discuss



- Do you know your own part in our church and are you playing it?
- What does it mean to 'belong to all the others' ?
- How does this image of the body affect how you see others in church?

Taking it Further

- Take time to prayerfully re-read the scriptures, do you know your own part?
- If not ask God and others to help you find it.
- Ask God to help you to see our church as He sees us.

1) All Saints Church - the Body of Christ

I believe that God wants His church back.

Key to that is for us to learn to see ourselves and His church as God sees us.

I've deliberately kept these studies simple with few words of my own as I want us to read the scriptures, engage with them and believe them.

Believe that God has called us together as;

The Body of Christ

The Bride of Christ

Branches to abide in Him and be fruitful.

Whether these scriptures are familiar to you or new to you, ask God to help you to see them as though for the first time.

Whether you're reading as part of your own devotions or in a study group, pray that God will give us His vision for His church and help us to take our place in it.

A suggested outline for group study

Open with worship and prayer

Divide your time between the 3 sections

In each of the 3 sections ...

- . Ask someone to read the scripture & reflection
- . Pause for a few minutes of personal prayer
- . Then discuss the questions given
- . At the end allow 10mins for personal prayer

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i) One Body – many members

'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Cor 12:12 & 27

And he (*Christ*) is the head of the body, the church ... Col 1:18

'speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.' Ephesians 4:15



Take time to slowly read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 then read it again!

Read the other scriptures above.

See the incredible privilege they show us ... we are the body of Christ.

Look at your own body (the body of Sue/you);

We are the body of Christ.

Christ Himself is the head of the body.

Each of us a different part as God has arranged us 1 Cor 12:18.

Just as you need to use your hand, arm, legs to live and work, so Christ needs us (His body) to live and work on earth.

He has chosen to need you, He has chosen to need us His body.

Take time to read the passages again, do you believe it?

Pause for Personal Prayer



Look at the parts of your own body – now you are part of Christ's body.

Discuss



Try moving your body, walk around the room, pick up a few things ...

- Why does Christ need a body now? - Discuss.
- What does it mean to you that you are a member of that body?
- What does it mean to you that Christ is the Head?

ii) No spare parts



God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. 1 Cor 12:18-23

Again slowly read the passage above.

Look at your own physical body, there are no spare parts, each part is essential to the others, each part needs the others.

It's the same with our Church, the Body of Christ in our location. There are no spare parts, each of us is essential to the body, we need each other.

So how do we value and care for each other? With our physical bodies if a knee is weak we care for it, compensate for it and do all we can to help it to heal. It should be the same with Christ's body.

Your physical body becomes limited if the hand is very strong but the arm is weak or if the legs can't carry the hand to where it needs to work.

In the church, the Body of Christ, each part needs the others. We have a vested interest in caring for each other, in helping each other to be strong.

God has designed us to spiritually need and honour each other!

To encourage one another 1 Thess 5:11, pray for one another Eph 6:18, invest in one another Eph 4:15 & 16 (speaking spiritual truths not home truths!). Above all to love one another 1 P 4:8.

Pause for Personal Prayer



There are no spare parts – you have your own place. Pause to pray.

Discuss



Again, try moving your body around a bit ...!

- What happens if part of your body isn't functioning well?
- Why has God made us as different parts - to need each other?
- What are the 'pros and cons' of that? - Share your own experience.