

October 10, 2021

# The Church as One Body

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

The idea of 1 Corinthians 12:13 is relatable: We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jew or Greek, slave or free—and we all were given one Spirit to drink. It's easy to imagine a number of situations where dissimilar parts have to work together to serve the whole: a sports team, a work family, or a community organization. Paul chose a metaphor for Christ that's simple to understand. What's interesting about it, though, is Paul is pretty clear that while all parts of the body are important, they shouldn't all be treated the same.

More care needs to be taken with certain delicate parts of the body. You don't treat your eyes the same way you treat the soles of your feet. Your eyes are more vulnerable. Paul also points out, "Instead, the parts of the body that people think are the weakest are the most necessary. The parts of the body that we think are less honorable are the ones we honor the most. . . . But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor so that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:22-25). So it is with the body of Christ. Not only are we different in our culture, environment, viewpoints, and socioeconomic status, but our spiritual gifts and needs are also different.

Some of us are weaker in particular areas and deserving of extra care. (Sometimes body parts need hearing aids, kneepads, or eyeglasses.) Some of us are stronger and can endure more (our feet, our backs). It is our responsibility, as part of the body of Christ, to use the gifts we have been given to the best of our ability. We shouldn't worry whether the eyes are doing their part or the back is carrying its weight. We need to help one another function in the best possible way so we can all be better. As the student book author writes, "The challenge for the early church, as for the modern, is to remember that our gifts were given to us to let Christ's light, not our own, shine through."<sup>1</sup>

1. Imagine yourself as a literal body part of the church. Which body part would you be, and why?
2. What are some of your strong spiritual gifts? What areas are you weaker in?
3. How can you help support others in the body of Christ this week?

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<sup>1</sup>From *Adult Bible Studies*, Fall 2021, by Greg Weeks (Cokesbury, 2021); page 60.