

BEING A PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

* I believe that individuals and congregations are very weak in their understanding of what it means to be **a part of the Body of Christ**; both as it relates to the whole as well as in a local church congregation.

1. How does one become a member of the Body of Christ?
2. Have we in the western world simply chosen christianity as our religion?
3. Is our faith truly a faith or is it just a part of our culture?
4. What is this and how does it work in our lives? Or how should it?

I. First, we must realize that we become a part of the Body of Christ **by birth!!**

A. The first mention of this term was by the Lord Himself! He said it during one of the most intimate and reverent time with His disciples!

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1. We are choosing to identify with Jesus' brokenness that heals our brokenness!
2. We are choosing to identify with Jesus' blood/life being poured out so we can truly live!!
3. Jesus and Paul said this act was for the constant commitment and identification of my need for a Savior!!

B. Our faith is **more** than merely **identifying with a belief**, it is a **dying to one life** and being **reborn into another life!**

Romans 6:4-11 (NIV)

4 We were therefore **buried with him through baptism into death** in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.**

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** For we know that **our old self was crucified with him** so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— **7** because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, **count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

II. Once we become a part of the Body of Christ we then must realize that we are **part of the whole!** We are a part of something **bigger than ourselves.**

A. **Then** we become a part of a **smaller expression** of the Body of Christ we call a **Congregation or Local Church!**

1. This is where we express our gifts, talents and service to the world around us!!!

1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27 (NIV)

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14** Even so the body is **not** made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the

whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. **19** If they were all one part, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, but one body. **21** 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!” **26** If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. **27** Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

2. A local church is merely a “**smaller portion**” of the Body of Christ!!
3. Only as we realize this can we function as a group of believers!
4. The Lord is very thorough and specific as to how we are to **live out our faith in community together!!**

Romans 12:10 New Century Version (NCV)

10 Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves.

B. I have heard **all kinds of statements** from members over the years that indicate folks do not really understand what **living in community** is all about!

1. “Look preacher, you need to remember who pays your salary!”
2. “This is my church and I want the music to be what I want!”
3. “I have been a member of this church for 30 years and I have a right to get what I want.”
4. “I don’t pay good money to this church to put up with so and so.”
5. “If you don’t do such and such I’ll withhold my offerings.”

C. These statements indicate that folks are **interested in receiving** instead of **giving and serving others!**

III. Notice Paul’s progression in his letter to the Corinthians:

- We are part of the Body of Christ and we identify as such through taking the Lords Supper or Communion. (Chapter 11)
- We need to practice unity in diversity and realize we all have a part to play, a talent to use and a gift to give. (Chapter 12)
- **Then**, he says the core of it all is **LOVE!**

1 Corinthians 13:3-8 (NIV)

3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered,** it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails.

A. The Church or Body of Christ is His expression in the earth!

1. Shouldn't we act like it!?!?!
2. Shouldn't we be an extension of His love and acceptance of one another?
3. Shouldn't we at least have a very high **tolerance** for each other?

John 13:35 New Living Translation (NLT)

35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

B. Love, acceptance, patience, kindness, encouragement, humility, meekness, and perseverance should be descriptions of how the Body of Christ relates to one another!!

1. This is how a healthy church looks!
2. This is the fertile soil of true **revival and reformation!**
3. This is how you have **unity in diversity** and reflect Jesus!!!