



July 26 – One Body

Weekly Reading – 1 Corinthians 10-14

This Week's Passage – 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Main Point

God has uniquely gifted every believer to strengthen and serve the body of Christ.

Key Verse

1 Corinthians 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. (ESV)

Life Group – The Flow

• 15 minutes – Conversation and relationship-building • 5 minutes – Looking back • 5 minutes – Introduction, Background, and Christ Connection • 30 minutes – Study and apply the Bible • 5 minutes – Application exercise • 10 minutes – Pray Through the Passage & Prayer Requests • 5 minutes – Conclusion	If Time is Limited... Focus on: • Main Point • Passage 2 – 1 Corinthians 12:21-27 • Passage 2 Reflection Question • Application Exercise • Pray Through the Passage • Final Takeaway • This Week's Challenge
---	---

Looking Back (5 min)



Use this time to celebrate obedience and encourage growth. Invite members to share how they sought to apply last week's challenge and what God taught them along the way. Focus on God's faithfulness and the progress He is making in our lives, not on perfect execution. Scan or click the QR code for last week's challenge.

Discuss one or more prompts:

- What step did you take this week to rely on God's strength in an area of temptation?
 - What "way of escape" did God provide that you may not have noticed before?
 - How did intentionally depending on God change your response?
 - What did this challenge teach you about God's faithfulness?
-

Introduction (5 min)

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Ask:

- Have you ever injured a part of your body that seemed small or unimportant—like a finger, toe, or ankle? What happened?

Follow-Up:

- How did that injury affect the rest of your body?

Say:

“When one part of the body suffers, the whole body feels it. In the same way, God designed the church so that every believer has a unique role to play. No member is unnecessary, and no gift is insignificant.”

Transition to Background:

“Paul's illustration of the body wasn't just clever; it addressed a real problem in the Corinthian church. Before we study the passage, let's consider why he used this picture.”

Background

The Background and Christ Connection sections are designed to provide context and a gospel lens for the lesson. Feel free to summarize these sections rather than reading them word-for-word.

Corinth was a wealthy and influential city known for its diversity, commerce, and competition for status. Those attitudes had begun to influence the church as well. Some believers viewed certain spiritual gifts as more important than others, creating pride, comparison, and division. Paul responded by reminding them that the church functions like a human body: every member is essential, and every gift is given by God for the good of the whole church.

Transition to Christ Connection:

“Paul's illustration reminds us that every believer has a place in Christ's body, but that truth begins with Jesus Himself.”

Christ Connection

Jesus is the Head of the church, and through His death and resurrection He formed one body made up of many members. Every believer is united to Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve others. Just as Jesus came not to be served but to serve, He calls His followers to use their gifts humbly and faithfully for the good of His body.

Transition to Passage 1:

“With that foundation in mind, let's examine Paul's first reminder to the Corinthians about God's design for His church.”

Study and Apply (30 min)

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says and how we can apply it in our lives this week.

Passage 1 – 1 Corinthians 12:12–20

READ THE PASSAGE – Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 12:12–20.

One Body with Many Members

[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.

[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.

[14] For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

[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.

[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.

[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?

[18] But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

[19] If all were a single member, where would the body be?

[20] As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (ESV)

Commentary

Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, feel free to summarize key insights rather than reading it word-for-word.

Verses 12:12–13.

The apostle issued three statements which set up the basic structure of his analogy. First, the human body is a unit. It is one body, even though it has many parts. Second, just as one human body has many parts, so it is with the body of Christ. Paul often called the church “the body of Christ” (Rom. 7:4). Here he pointed to the unity in diversity that exists in the church as Christ’s body. Third, Paul explained how Christ’s body resembles the human body. To emphasize the diversity within the church, he mentioned racial and social diversity first; Jews, Greeks, slave, and free all contribute to the church. No matter what had previously separated these people, they all had been joined together in one body by means of the one Spirit.

Verses 12:14–17.

Paul turned next to human body imagery to illustrate the importance of proper regard for all parts of Christ’s body. After repeating the motif of 12:12, the body has not one part but many, he presented two scenarios that conveyed his outlook on the disharmonies in the Corinthian church. First, he imagined parts of the body thinking too lowly of themselves. A foot may say to itself that it does not belong to the body because it is not a hand. Even so, even if it thinks this way about itself, it does not cease to be part of the body. The same would be true of an ear that felt it did not belong to the body because it was not an eye. Paul meant that Christians are not cut off from the body of Christ because they think they have no importance or place of service. Each part of the body makes unique contribution to the whole. How foolish it would be for the whole body to be one part.

Verses 12:18–20.

The foolishness of these scenarios indicates that God has arranged the parts of the human body according to His divine wisdom. He made them just as He wanted them to be—their composition being designed to fulfill His purposes—and God’s wisdom in so doing should not be questioned. This divine coordination of diverse parts is so essential to the function of a body that Paul asked a final question: “If every part of the body were one part—all eyes, all ears, all feet—where would the body be?” Clearly, there would be no body. To drive home this point, Paul repeated the theme of this section: human beings have one body, but that body needs its many parts. Every part is important in its own right.

💡 **Consider This -**

Optional illustration to reinforce the passage.

On April 13, 1970, an oxygen tank exploded aboard Apollo 13, turning what was supposed to be the third moon landing into a desperate mission to bring three astronauts home alive. Their survival depended on far more than the astronauts themselves. Hundreds of engineers, technicians, mathematicians, and flight controllers worked around the clock, each contributing their unique expertise to solve one problem after another. No one person had all the answers, but together they accomplished what none of them could have done alone.

The church functions in much the same way. God has not designed one person to do everything. Instead, He gives different gifts, abilities, and opportunities to different believers so that, together, the body of Christ can grow and fulfill His mission. Every member matters because every member has been given a role by God; not just pastors or leaders, but every believer.

Guide Discussion

You do not need to cover every question. Use the questions that best help your group engage with the passage. I do encourage you to use the Reflective question to provide more engagement from your Life Group.

1. **Good for Students.** According to Paul, how does the human body illustrate the relationship between believers in the church?
2. **Discuss.** Why do you think Paul chose the human body – not an army, business, or family – to describe the church?
3. **Deeper Dive.** What do these verses teach us about God's purpose in giving different gifts and roles within the church?

4. ★ Reflective – write answers on an index card (these can be found in the resource cart). How would your attitude toward serving change if you truly believed God intentionally designed your role in His church?

Teaching Insight

The Teaching Insight is intended to help you identify and emphasize the main truth of the passage. Consider using it as a brief summary after discussion or a way to clarify the lesson's central message if your group gets off track.

Say:

“Paul's illustration emphasizes both unity and diversity. Every believer has equal value before God, but not every believer has the same role. God intentionally designed His church with different gifts and roles so that believers would depend on one another rather than compete with one another.”

Transition to Passage 2:

“Paul has shown that every member belongs to the body. Now he explains why every member is also needed by the body.”

Passage 2 – 1 Corinthians 12:21–27

READ THE PASSAGE – Have volunteers read 1 Corinthians 12:21–27.

[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.”

[22] On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

[23] 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,

[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,

[25] that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

[26] If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

[27] Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (ESV)

Commentary

Verses 12:21–24a.

Paul then presented scenarios in which the body parts questioned the value of others. Paul insisted it would be inconceivable for an eye to tell a hand, “I don’t need you!” The same inconceivability would apply to the head speaking that way to the feet. Common

sense demands that the opposite is true. The eyes need the hands, and the head needs the feet. The parts of the body which appear to be weaker are actually indispensable.

Verses 12:24b-26.

Paul contended that God himself had given greater honor to the members of the body that lacked obvious honor. He did this for the purpose of making sure that there would be no division in the body and that all parts should have equal concern for each other. The interdependence of all parts evidences this design. If one part suffers from pain or disease, then every part suffers with it. Most people have experienced how things as small as toothaches and ingrown toenails can wreak havoc on their bodies. The appendix may be small and have no apparent function, but when it suffers, it jeopardizes the life of the entire body.

Moreover, when one part is honored and treated with great care, then every other part of the body rejoices with it. For example, soaking one's feet in cool water after a long walk brings delight to the entire body. God exhibits His design in these common experiences. He has arranged the human body so that every part is important to every other part.

Guide Discussion

1. **Good for Students.** What responsibilities do believers have toward one another according to these verses?
2. **Discuss.** What does it practically look like for believers to "suffer together" and "rejoice together" as Paul describes in these verses?
3. **Deeper Dive.** What habits help a church move from simply gathering together to genuinely caring for one another?
 - vulnerability
 - consistency
 - prayer
 - meals
 - following up
 - smaller groups
 - hospitality
 - serving
4. ★ **Reflective** – write answers on an index card (these can be found in the resource cart). If someone observed your involvement in the church over the past month, would they conclude that you're primarily consuming or contributing? Why?

Teaching Insight

Say:

“The church grows healthiest when every believer embraces both humility and responsibility. Rather than seeking recognition, believers are called to faithfully use whatever gifts God has entrusted to them for the good of others. Every act of service, whether seen or unseen, strengthens the body of Christ.”

Transition into Application Exercise:

“Paul reminds us that every believer has a unique role in strengthening the body of Christ. Take a few moments to honestly evaluate how God has gifted and positioned you to serve others.”.

Application Exercise (5-7 min)

★ **This is a good opportunity to introduce and explain the Life Group roles - Co-Leader, Prayer Champion, D-Group Champion, In-Reach Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator:**

Body Builders

Time: 5-7 minutes

Supplies: Index Card - you can find them in the resource cart

Instructions

Discuss:

- What abilities, experiences, or spiritual gifts has God given you that could benefit others?
- Where do you naturally enjoy serving or encouraging people?
- What needs have you noticed within your Life Group or church that resonate with you?
- Which Life Group role, or another ministry opportunity, might best align with the way God has uniquely wired you?
- What's one practical step you could take this week to move from simply attending to actively contributing?

Transition into Pray Through the Passage:

“As we've reflected on the unique ways God has gifted each of us, it's important to remember that serving Christ isn't ultimately about our

abilities—it's about His work in and through us. Let's spend a few moments praying through this passage, asking God to shape our hearts and help us faithfully use the gifts He has given us.”

Pray Through the Passage (10 min)

Led by the Prayer Champion:

Read the verse/passage, then read the prayer prompt out loud. Allow a few moments between prompts for reflection and prayer. Encourage members to personalize each prayer by filling in the blank with their own response.

Prompt 1 - Adoration (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 12:18 - But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. (ESV)

- Lord, I praise You because You are perfectly wise and intentional in all that You do, especially in _____.

Prompt 2 - Confession (can be silent)

1 Corinthians 12:15–16- 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. [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. (ESV)

- Lord, forgive me for comparing myself to others or believing that my contribution is _____.

Prompt 3 - Gratitude (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 12:26 - If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (ESV)

- Lord, thank You for the people in my church who faithfully serve and encourage me through _____.

Prompt 4 - Response/Obedience (have people pray this prompt out loud)

1 Corinthians 12:27 - Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (ESV)

- Lord, help me strengthen Your church this week by using the gifts You've given me to _____.

End the prayer prompt time and transition to the next section:

Prayer Requests, Praises, and Follow-Up

1. Take a few minutes to ask the group for updates from the previous week's prayer requests. Encourage the group to celebrate answered prayers.
2. Next, identify specific needs that can be prayed for throughout this coming week. Encourage members to be vulnerable and open in their needs so members can better and more fully support each other in prayer and in tangible ways.
3. Record requests and praises, share them with the group during the week, and follow up on them at the next gathering.

Transition into Conclusion:

"God has intentionally placed each of us within His church for a purpose. As we leave today, let's remember that every act of faithful service - whether seen or unseen - strengthens the body of Christ and brings glory to Him. Let's encourage one another to faithfully use the gifts God has entrusted to us this week."

Conclusion (5 min)



Scan or click the QR code and share the link in your Life Group's group chat (e.g. GroupMe, text or email thread, etc.) so they can see This Week's Challenge. Encourage your group to keep these questions in mind, review/memorize the Key Verse during the week, and engage in the Year of Prayer reading plan this week.

Final Takeaway

After discussion concludes, read the takeaway statement:

God has uniquely gifted every believer to strengthen the body of Christ. As each member faithfully serves, the church grows stronger, reflects Christ more clearly, and fulfills His mission together.

This Week's Challenge

Respond – *What will I do this week?*

Prayerfully identify one way you can intentionally strengthen the body of Christ this week.

Examples:

- Encourage someone in your Life Group.
- Reach out to a member who has been absent.
- Volunteer to help meet a practical need.
- Begin serving in a ministry where God has gifted you.
- Talk with your Life Group leader about taking on a greater role in the group.

Reflect – *What is God showing me?*

- Where has God uniquely gifted me to serve others?
- Am I more likely to compare my gifts with others or faithfully use what God has entrusted to me?
- Who in my church or Life Group has strengthened my faith through their faithful service?
- What would it look like for me to contribute more intentionally to the health of Christ's body?

Review – *How will I keep God's Word before me?*

Review this week's **Key Verse** each day and ask God to use it to shape your heart and thinking throughout the week.

1 Corinthians 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. (ESV)

Read – *How will I prepare for next week?*

This week's reading is **1 Corinthians 15–19**. You can access the Year of Prayer reading plan [here](#).

Prayer

Either pray something like the guide below, or invite someone in the group to close in prayer.

Father, thank You for making us part of the body of Christ through Your Son. Thank You for uniquely gifting each believer to serve, encourage, and strengthen Your church. Help us resist comparison, embrace the role You have given us, and faithfully use our gifts to build up others. May our church reflect the unity, love, and humility of Christ as each member serves together for Your glory. In Jesus' name, amen.