

Family Matters

May 2009

Essential Connectedness & its Benefits

¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 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!" ...²⁴ But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 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."

1 Corinthians 12: 14, 18, 21, 24-27 NIV

I know that putting a long portion of scripture at the beginning of my article tempts many of us to just skip over it, "I've read that before." Can I ask you to reread the verses I printed above before you go on? Thanks for rereading this declarative portion of scripture regarding the nature and the benefits of being a member of Jesus' Body. Let me note a couple truths spoken in this passage about life in Jesus' Body.

1. We all are a "part" of Jesus' Body. This means we have an identity beyond our individuality. (v.14)
2. God arranged us, or placed us into Jesus' Body. Relationships within Jesus' Body are God's plan. (v.18)
3. Relationships are God's way of meeting needs of the heart so that we know what it means to love and be loved like God loves us. (v.21)
4. Demonstrated concern and esteeming honor for one another develops a loving environment of healing and health. (v.24, 25)
5. Everyone is known and loved in such a manner that we begin to experience the transformational resurrection life of Jesus in our relationships. No one is left behind or left out. (v.26, 27)

Doesn't reading about life in Jesus' Body excite you for the possibilities? If you think about the quality of life that is possible as defined in this passage of Scripture it creates a hunger in me for all that Jesus says in His Word. A community of people who love one another "in sickness and in health" "in plenty and in want" "till death do us part" –in such a manner that every member is loved to wholeness and grows in their ability love others.

A passage of the book the men are studying on Wednesday evenings brought home to me Jesus' dream and desire for His Body. The chapter is entitled, "Courageous

Confession.” The author is leading us to adopt a lifestyle of personal accountability demonstrated by confession to a small number of other men. He asks the question that many of Jesus’ followers ask, “Why does God require confession to other believers?” His answer, *“First, that’s a big reason why the body of Christ exists –so that we can have a place to go with our struggles and sin.... we see this happen all the time, confession opens the door for encouragement, support, and counsel from other men. Finally, honest confession produces unity among men and encourages others with similar struggles to come out of hiding.”* (pg158, Every Man, God’s Man)

As I read this portion of our lesson, my mind jumped beyond our men’s ministry to our entire church family. I ached as I thought of many who are missing out on the life that Jesus intends for each of His kids. My heart yearns for every member and friend of New Life to know the power of Jesus’ resurrection made alive through relationships in the context of our small group ministry: LIFE Groups.

As you finish this article, I’d ask you to stop and contemplate the benefits that He promises through relationships in His Body. I’d ask you to consider the principles listed above from 1Corinthians and whether you are taking advantage of the riches of life in Jesus’ Body. As a local newspaper says about its readership, “If you don’t get it –you don’t get it” –holds true for the amazing benefit of loving and being loved in Jesus’ Body. If you’re not involved in our small group network, you’re not getting it –the life of Jesus through His Body. Involvement means, life.

Pastor Dave