

WHAT IS YOUR PLACE IN THE CHURCH?

1 Corinthians 12:14-22

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INTRODUCTION:

What can I do in the church? How can I serve? Where can my talents best be used for the advancement of the cause of Christ? It is our prayer that every Christian will ask these questions. We want to be a working, caring, serving congregation of God's people.

Lesson outlines:

Standing In Your Place

We Differ In Our Abilities

looking at Parts of The Body

WE ARE Workers Together with God

And He Gave Some....

What Can I Do?

I'm Just Not Gifted

Getting The Job Done

STANDING IN YOUR PLACE

There was a time in the life of Israel when God told Gideon that he was to fight against Midian. However, God instructed Gideon to reduce his army of 32,000 men to 300 men, lest Israel become boastful, saying, "My own power has delivered me." When everything was in readiness, and when Gideon's 300 men had surrounded the camp of the Midianites, the record says that "each stood in his place around the camp" (**Judges 7:21**). Midian was defeated. God can defeat any enemy, conquer any foe, solve any problem, so long as each one of us will stand "in his place." Conversely, the work of the Lord suffers to the extent that just one of us fails to "*stand in his place.*"

WE DIFFER IN OUR ABILITIES:

The Apostle Paul reminded us that "all the members do not have the same function" (**Romans 12:4**). He said that we indeed are one body, but we are many members, and we are "*individually members one of another*" (**Romans 12:5**). We have differing gifts (or abilities), and while one person's ability may be that of teaching, another's ability may be that of serving. One may have a special ability in

leadership, and another may have that special knack for tenderness at the hospital bed. Whatever the gift, the expectation is that it be used for Christ.

LOOKING AT PARTS OF THE BODY

In I Corinthians 12 Paul used the allegory of the church as being likened to parts of the human body. He says that the body is one (that is, one body, a complete entity) though it has many parts. There are hands, feet, eyes, ears, and each of these body parts has a function differing from other parts of the body. He says: *"If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body"* (**I Corinthians 12:15**). In his allegory Paul has parts of the body which can't talk (an ear can't talk) doing the talking. *"And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body"* (**I Corinthians 12:16**). Paul's purpose in this analogy is to point out the fact that there are many members in the church, just as there are many members of the human body. The eyes do the seeing for the whole body; the ears do the hearing. God has placed each member in the body as it pleased Him, and each one has a function. Whenever the individual parts fail to function properly, the whole body suffers.

WE ARE WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

Paul used a phrase in **2 Corinthians 6:1** which says, "And working together with Him...." It is a fascinating thought that we can indeed be workers together with God in the accomplishment of His purposes. While my part in God's scheme of things may be small, it is nevertheless significant. If I fail, then my part goes undone. Even the nail that holds down a sheet on the roof is important. Nothing in the service of the Lord can be called insignificant.

AND HE GAVE SOME...

The full organization of the church is seen in **Ephesians 4:11, 12**. *"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."* Apostles and prophets were limited to the first century, and their offices, along with the miraculous gifts which accompanied them, were done away with the completion of the word of God, "the perfect" (**I Corinthians 13:10**). Some men have the ability to proclaim the gospel to the lost, and God uses their ability in the evangelistic work of the church. Some men have leadership ability and can serve as shepherds of the flock. Some have the ability to teach, and the whole church will forever stand in need of instruction. All of these works are intended to equip the saints (Christians) for the work of service, in order that the body of Christ might be strengthened.

WHAT CAN I DO?

If your ability lies in the areas just mentioned above, then by all means use your talent to the glory of God. Many Christians have the ability to teach, and the church will need teachers as long as the world stands. Children must be taught, and many of our fine Christian ladies have used their talents in creative ways to broaden the minds of our little ones. It is a joy to walk into the classrooms of our talented teachers and hear "the walls talking" with the products of their creative ability. Any Christian who has the ability to teach, unless hindered by other circumstances, should exercise that ability in the church.

I'M JUST NOT GIFTED

It would be totally out of place to suggest that everyone has the ability to teach in a formal setting. In fact, James issued a warning when he said, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment" (**James 3:1**). Teachers are needed. Song leaders are needed. People who can lead in prayer are needed, but there are other areas of service as well. You can find a place to serve. There are Christians who have the ability to encourage other workers in the kingdom. Their kindness and love mean so much to those who are working in public ways. Nothing means more to a Christian than to know that his work is pleasing to God and to others. Never say, "I'm just not gifted." Your gift, your ability, may not be the same as that of another Christian, but it is needed like others. You can do things, perhaps, that those whom you consider to be gifted cannot do.

GETTING THE JOB DONE

There are times when church work means hard work to some persons. Sometimes it is the baking of a cake for someone in need. Sometimes it is the writing of a note of encouragement. Sometimes it is seeing a job that needs to be done and doing it. Be assured that God has a place for you in the church. Don't wait for someone to ask you to do it. Find your place of service and give God the strength of your whole being. He expects no less.

CONCLUSION

Remember that as a Christian, you are part of the body of Christ. This means that all Christians have something to contribute to the body of Christ. In addition to that, we also have received at least one spiritual gift. The purpose of that spiritual gift is to build up the body of Christ. "God provides spiritual gifts to people for the fulfilling of role requirements or "for the common good" (**1 Cor. 12:7**). In fact, certain persons are intended by God to fill up certain positions "so that the body of Christ may be built up" (**Eph. 4:11-12**).