**The Crucial Importance of the Church**

**The Church, the body of Christ, is the fullness of God.**

“*….the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him [God] who fills all in all.*” (Ephesians 1:22–23, NKJV)

**God the Holy Spirit baptizes (places) us into the body.**

“*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body*” (1 Corinthians 12:13, NKJV)

**He places us in the body as it pleases Him.**

“*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*” (1 Corinthians 12:18, NKJV)

**We then are one spirit with Christ. He is the head. We are the body and share His spirit.**

*“But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” (1 Corinthians 6:17, NKJV)*

**We also have the mind of Christ.**

“*For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 2:16, NKJV)

**We also are members of His flesh and bones. Our hands, toes and eyes are His flesh and bones.**

“*For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*” (Ephesians 5:30, NKJV)

**We are therefore members of one another since we are part of the same body and share the same spirit.**

“*so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*” (Romans 12:5, NKJV)

**The Holy Spirit gives a manifestation (external evidence, gift, spiritual ability) to each Christian to be used for the profit of the other parts of the body for the overall health and growth of the body.**

“*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*” (1 Corinthians 12:7, NKJV)

“*But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*” (1 Corinthians 12:11, NKJV)

**A body is healthy only when all its parts are there and functioning according to their design. When a part of our body is not functioning or is functioning weakly, our body is not healthy and not growing as it should. The same is true of the body of Christ. Every part has a function. Every part is connected to every other part and must be aware of the impact it would have on the other parts of the body if it does not function as it should. There are no individual parts of the body just floating out in space. All parts are interconnected and have the same life and spirit flowing through them.**

“*from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*” (Ephesians 4:16, NKJV)

“*But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And 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.” No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor… But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*”
 (1 Corinthians 12:20–27, NKJV)

**Spiritual Gifts Listed in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12**

Word of wisdom Mercy

Word of knowledge Leading

Faith Giving

Healings\* Exhortation

Miracles\* Teaching

Prophecy1 Serving

Discerning spirits Administration

Tongues\* Helps

Interpretation of tongues\*

Many of these characteristics, such as faith and giving, should be present generally among God’s people. But some are especially gifted by the Spirit in these areas.

There may be additional gifts not listed here, but many of these gifts cover a lot of areas. Gifts such as serving, faith, or helps have a broad range of applications.

God gives some men gifts to be used to equip others to do the ministry.

“*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men…. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*” (Ephesians 4:7–13, NKJV)

“*And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers….*”
(1 Corinthians 12:28, NKJV)

The main point to remember is that you as a Christian have been given one or more of these gifts. God has given the gift to be used in and with the local body of Christ. There should be a consciousness and awareness of the rest of the body and how your gifts are serving for the edification of others so that the body is made stronger and healthier “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13). This is to be intentional. It does not just happen. Paul warned the Corinthian Christians about this when instructing them about communion. It wasn’t general secret sins that Paul warned them about resulting in “some are weak and sickly among you and many sleep,” it was not discerning the Lord’s body. The body of Christ, the fullness of God, with its many members was right there among them and they didn’t see it. They were just interested in themselves and making sure their personal needs were met.

“*For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.*” (1 Corinthians 11:29, NKJV)

**Questions each Christian must ask himself:**

**1. What is the gift or gifts the Holy Spirit has given me?**

**2. How am I using my gift in the church to serve the Body?**

**3. Am I a healthy member of the body functioning and interconnected with others?**

**4. How is my gift strengthening the body, building up others in the body and helping the body to grow and mature?**

\*We believe these were special gifts given to the church to authenticate the apostles’ message and are no longer widely active today. This does not mean that God cannot or does not use these gifts in some special circumstances today.

1By prophecy we mean the Spirit enabled proclamation of the truth of Scripture, not the foretelling the future.