

## Place in the Body

The Mindset of most people today is this: 'I want independence', 'I want my freedom'. I want to get everyone's hands off of me, so I can do what I want with my life. I can see the people I want to see, visit the places I want to visit, do the things that I want to do.

It is really unfortunate that this same mentality has been brought into the church, 'I don't really want to be involved, I believe in everything which is going on, what we just saw, what we just heard, that is fantastic, 'here is the deal, I have worked it all out, I know exactly the time to get here to find a good parking place, I know exactly where my seat is, as if I get here in time, I can get my seat, sit down, sing the songs, put my money in the offering plate, and get out of here. I shall be here pastor, I am behind you, 100%, but I am just busy, I am a busy person!' and you know what, *I totally understand you!*

I have also all those same issues, any of you who know me and something of my life, I am never sitting down, I have exams to study for, essays to write, services to lead, people to visit, tasks to do, classes to teach, and everything else hitting me all the time, and it would be so easy just to get that mind set 'I love Jesus, I am just going to do my bit, I am going to go to church on Sunday, then I am out of here, and I am part of the church.'

Problem is, what I believe you have failed to understand, is that God has given YOU, a divine and unique calling, and when you stand before him one day, what are you going to tell him you have done with the gifting/calling which he has given to you? You have been God called, commissioned, ordained as a priest of God to fulfil a special role, in this his church. \*\*\*

It really hurts me, that I am now meeting so many people in the church with the mentality 'let someone else do it', I want you to see God's view of you! It is not so important how we see ourselves, but how God sees us, that is really true.

Look in your bibles with me at

Ephesians 4 - Unity in the Body of Christ

**1**As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. **4**There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— **5**one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6**one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**7**But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

That here is an amazing scripture, listen to what Paul said, he said that to each one of us – Grace (Grace here means enabling grace, a talent, a gift, a special ability, something which you can do, which no one else can.) *has been given*. You see we have all been given different abilities, a friend of mine who is a pastor, speaks regular in

front of 1000s of people, but he once told me that his wife is such a non-platform person, that if he was to start to choke to death in the front, she would sit there in the front row and watch him die, rather than get up on the stage. However his wife an amazing organiser, she is an amazing person behind the scenes, she is so gifted in children's work. And this here is what Paul is saying. We all have our callings and our gifts. For some of you, you just love organizing, and for others, you are always searching for that piece of paper which is in your hand. For some of you, your just such a loving person, some of you can teach, and others try to teach and everyone is yawning, you bore us to death, you just don't have that gift. Some of you can do administration, some of you are a sales person, doesn't matter what it is, you can sell it.

And Paul is saying that we are all part of one body, and we all have unique gifting and ability but the same divine enablement.

Okay, lets look back at Ephesians 4, more closely,

**11**It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

WHY? WHY? WHY?

**12**to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13**until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

What is that all about, what he is saying is, the reason that God gives every believer an unique gift is that the whole body will grow up, and no longer be immature, we will no longer be babies

Okay I want to give you an illustration, is not a beautiful illustration, but I believe it shows the point. Imagine we had a five year old child, and a box. We took the five year old child, chopped off the hand, and put it inside the box. The hand which has been now disconnected from the body, is sitting in this box over here. And you just let that box sit. You heal up the wound on that child's arm, where the hand has been removed, and for ten years you do nothing. Now you have a 15 year old, the child grows, but that arm that was disconnected from the body, it doesn't grow, the rest of the body has grown, but that part of the body which has been removed, which is not connected or interacting with the body, it shrivels up, it dries up, becomes rotten and stinking, and when we reach into the box, we have a big grow body over here, and there we have just bone and gross because it has been disconnected from the body.

If you are not engaged in some sort of ministry, if you are not doing something, you are part of the body of Christ, but you are just like that hand in the box, and this is what scares me, as the church grows more and more, if you don't connect to the body, you will not mature. I used to think the way you mature is to read the bible, pray, go to church on Sunday, read, pray .... and these are important, but what Paul said was 'the way you stop being an infant

in the body, is you have to take your part' We are all parts of the body and a part of the body can't say to another part 'I don't need you'

When you don't connect that part of the body which you have to the whole body you are dying. You may be thinking 'I don't know what is missing, I love Jesus, I go to church, but something is missing' well I can tell you, come every Sunday, sit down in a corner and do nothing, you will be just like that hand in the box. The rest of the body will keep growing, and you shall just be left behind rotting.

You see when Jesus walked around on earth, he was God in a body, God's mouth, God's hand, God's ears – God. But when he left, he sent the Holy Spirit to come in and divinely enable the body of church – the church.

I want to share with you know a true story, this is a story about a women who had been praying for her husband to be saved for a long time, and it really shows, why it is important to connect with other believers, because as a body we can achieve, what we could never achieve alone. The closes experience that people can have with the actual presence of Jesus, is a church which is totally together, connected and engaged.

Okay so this Lady, had been praying for here husband 8 years. She had been fasting for 6 months on and off. Every Sunday she would ask her husband to come to church with her, and he would say No. Finally they struck a deal, she told him, that she would do everything for him, cook his favourite food, not nag him or anything, if he would take her to church on Sunday. He agreed.

Now this is what I want you to understand, she said, all week long, when I knew he was going to come, (now remember this women situation 8 long years had she been praying for this day) I was praying for the Pastor, 'please have a message, please knock it out, please don't just get up and mess around, I am counting on you, please! This is what she was doing, all the way driving up to the church she is thinking and praying 'please let there be a parking place', please let the parking lot attendants be friendly, everything has to be perfect, he is just looking for a situation to be annoyed. Please let the child carers be there, when we take our son there, please let them be on time, let them be there early to have cleaned up, please don't let it be dirty, an environment where he doesn't want to leave his child in, Let all the people be there, he will say, I am not leaving my child in that bad house 28 kid running around and two women trying to get control, he will just get back in the car and drive home. Please let the greeters be friendly, please let them speak to him, he is always complaining that church are not friendly. Please when we are looking for a seat, let people move over, and please let them say hello when we sit down, please let the ushers be friendly and helpful. And Pastor when you get up there, don't you dare take a long offering, he already thinking the church are just after his money . Don't do it, Don't do it. Please worship band, don't be out of practise this week, you need to do it good, you need to be like that Sunday 5 weeks ago when tears were coming down my face, you can't just hope for the best, it needs to be great, I have worked 8 long years to get him here.

What she was really saying is ' I want 400 people to partner with me, to get my husband's soul saved, to let him see Jesus Christ, the sermon didn't start in the pulpit, but in the parking place. Now think about what you have done so far this morning, how many people have you greeted in church? How have **you parked** your car? Did you really need to park so close, so that someone who finds it hard to walk, needs to walk further? Were you here **early**, to make sure everything was clean, to help set up the children's room. Worship band, how often have you practised this week.

Now imaging that this women's husband, was your husband / your wife. Your unsaved child, your mother or father who haven't been to church for 20 years.

And what I am saying to you, is that if you have just decided your going to come to church sit down and get out of here as soon as you can, I am not going to get engaged, I am not going to get involved; the church cannot afford to have too many of you. Because if we believe in what we say we believe in, there is a heaven and there is a hell, this is not something which we can play with.

This requires that we are at our best, that next Sunday as this man pulls up to church with his wife, he may look around and say 'I am not sure about that guy up in the pulpit yet, he said something which made me think, but I got to admit, these people, this place, Man are they passionate. That guy, who shock my hand? What was that with the kids, all these people, doing such an amazing service, free, much better than the kindergarten. There is something real there.

If you don't know why you are not fully alive spiritually, if you don't know what you are missing, because you just come and believe it is the pastor job to fire you up every Sunday. Now is time for you to commit, because your ultimate purpose, is not to bless yourself, but it is all about the kingdom and he said (Paul) when all this happens, then the church grows. Not when the pastor turns up and preaches a good sermons but when everyone is engaged in the gift which God has given to them. It is only what you do for Christ that will last, so use that gift for God, for his glory, you shall be better and we shall be better, because you are connected to the body.