

1 Corinthians 12:14-31 (ESV)

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If 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. ¹⁶And 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. ¹⁷If 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? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹The 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.” ²²On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Next Week: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

1. Why would anyone in a church complain about another person the same way the foot complains about the hand? What might that sound like? (v.14-17)
2. Would you say this is the complaint of someone in the inner circle of the church or someone outside the inner circle wishing they were in? Why? From this text how would you counsel the complainer? (v.14-17)
3. As you think about the insider/outsider division in the church? What might it sound like today? “Because I am not _____ I can’t _____.”
4. Why might someone in the church feel he/she doesn’t need another member like the eye doesn’t need the hand? (v.21)
5. Do you think the person represented by the eye is an insider or an outsider? Why? How would you counsel them? (v. 19-25)
6. What are some less presentable parts of the body of Christ as you see it? (v.22-24) What might they do in a church? How might you honor them?
7. How do you think the Holy Spirit is empowering you to serve the Body of Christ? What does the rest of the group think about you?
8. How might you express your need for someone with lesser gifts or your appreciation for someone with greater gifts? What keeps you from doing that?