



The Heights Baptist Church

Everyone Plays a Part • Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11 • 10/10/2021

MAIN POINT

The body of Christ is one unit composed of many essential parts for the growth of the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If you had to lose one of your five senses, which one would you choose first? Which one would you choose last? Why?

Our senses help us in many ways, ways that we often take for granted. Our hearing lets us enjoy beautiful music, and we can be warned of danger when someone yells, “Look out!” With tasting, we can enjoy delicious meals and be warned of rotten ones! Our senses help us both enjoy life and keep us safe, and we would be reluctant to give any of them up easily.

The Bible teaches us that God designed the church as a body. Some people act as eyes, others as ears, and others as the heart. The people in the church help us enjoy life and worship God, and they also warn us of danger. Each person has a particular role to play in the health of the church, and the church suffers if any one of us suffers.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a Volunteer to read Romans 12:3-5.

How does understanding that the church is a body help us to stay humble?

What do you think Paul means that each of us has been given “a measure of faith”?

How close does verse five indicate that we should be to one another?

Paul warns Timothy that a new convert should not be elevated to the position of pastor because “he might become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the Devil” (1 Tim. 3:6).

Sometimes, if we have a gift for preaching or teaching or some special service, we might have the mistaken impression that we are more important than other members of the church. When we understand that every part of the church body is essential, it helps us see that while we are all useful, we are not better than other members of Christ's body.

Paul teaches that each follower of Christ has been given a measure of faith by God, and that each of us is to serve according to our faith. If we have a gift, it is only because God gave it to us, so we cannot brag about our faith as if we did something to get it. God has given each member of the body a gift and a role, and each of those gifts is special and important for the well-being of the entire church.

Verse five teaches that we are “one body” and “members of one another.” Without getting to know friends in Christ through our local church, we will not be able to be members of one another as we need to be. The gifts that God has given to the body will never be of use to us if we don't get to know the ones who have the gifts!

| Ask a Volunteer to read Romans 12:6-8.

Do you think that Paul's list of spiritual gifts is exhaustive? If not, what other spiritual gifts are there?

Why might the gift of showing mercy be as important as prophecy?

Paul's list was not intended to be exhaustive. In both 1 Corinthians 12 8-10 and Ephesians 4:11, Paul mentions gifts that aren't in this list. In other places Paul mentions things like being single and being married as gifts, as well. Paul's point is not to exhaust the list of gifts, but to demonstrate that there are many kinds of gifts, and that none of them should be neglected.

Mercy, though it comes at the bottom of the list, is just as necessary as prophecy. A merciless church would not be a Christ-like church. And who would want to be part of a church with members who are neither encouraging nor generous? All the unique gifts that God has given to the church are necessary for us to be built up in Christ.

| Ask a Volunteer to read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

How do spiritual gifts show God's “varied grace”?

Why did God give spiritual gifts to the church?

We know that we aren't God, even though we may not act like it at times. No one has all the qualities of God in their person. Therefore, God uses different people, our brothers and sisters, to show us different aspects of His goodness. Our limited abilities and sinful nature keep us from fully reflecting the glory of God; yet together as a church, God can demonstrate the beauty of Christ to the world.

The point of every spiritual gift is not to exalt the person with the gift. Rather, spiritual gifts are of the purpose of glorifying God! All our actions are supposed to act as beacons pointing others to God and His greatness. God designed the church to work together as a body to show the world the beauty of God in Christ.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How have you seen God's grace more clearly through the church body than through being alone?

How might we help and encourage one another to use our spiritual gifts?

What do you think is the best way to find out what our spiritual gift(s) might be?

PRAYER

In a time of group prayer, thank the Father for giving us gifts to show others His grace. Ask Him to help us use our gifts by faith so that we might build up and encourage those around us. Finally, pray for those who may not be using their gifts or who are still uncertain as to what those gifts might be.

COMMENTARY

| romans 12:3-8

12:3-8 As part of a renewed mind, the Christian is to think wisely about himself and what his function is to be in the body of Christ (the church; see 1Co 12:12-28). Measure of faith may mean a person should measure himself by the gospel. Others see it as different apportionments of faith. Either way, Paul exhorts Christians to be humble and to use what God has given for the good of the body. Based on Rm 12:3; 1Co 12:8-10; Eph 4:11; 1Pe 4:10, Christians are given gifts to use for the good of others.

The NT lists at least 17 kinds of gifts. Christians are defined not just by their personal faith but also by their inclusion in local faith fellowships that are expressions of the body of Christ (see 1Co 12:12-31). Only some of the gifts are explained in this present passage. Prophecy in the NT churches was direct revelation from God before the canon was completed. This gift was to be used and measured in concert with the objective body of Christian truths. Service (Gk diakonia) is the origin of the word “deacon.” A deacon here is not a member of a board of directors but a servant. It describes not a title or office but a gift of ministry. Pastors should have this gift. Teaching is an essential gift. Parents teach children, older believers teach younger believers, vocational pastor-teachers are the primary instructors in a church, and elders should be able to teach also. All believers can teach to some level, but those who have a special facility for teaching are responsible to develop and utilize it. Exhortation is the gift of motivating and encouraging. This gift is similar to the Holy Spirit's function. Giving is to be done with generosity. All can give, but capacities differ. Some delight to give out of very small means (Mk 12:41-44); others give a “reverse tithe”—they give 90 percent and live on 10 percent. Leading is a gift of vision and direction that is effective but should not be overbearing. Mercy is helping the sick, the poor, and the sorrowful. This gift is to be exercised with cheerfulness. Practical assistance to needy members was a main emphasis of the early churches. This same emphasis should characterize churches today.

| 1 peter 4:10-11

4:10 The words based on the gift each one has received refer to a spiritual gift. Spiritual gifts are divine endowments that God entrusts to believers as stewards.

4:11 Christians should manage and use their spiritual gifts to God's glory, just as God intends.