

TEXT 1 Corinthians 12:14-27

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:1-4,11-13,16

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that a consecration of themselves, and faithful service in all that the Lord gives them to do will make them usable members of the Body of Christ.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. — 1 Corinthians 12:27

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. — Colossians 1:18

ANSWER TITLE: **A Special Part**

SEARCH TITLE: **Do I Fit?**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The mystical body, the Church, as well as the natural body, is composed of many members. As members of the physical body are dependent upon each other and minister to the general support of their system, so it is in a Church. All members are connected among themselves, and without such union the Church cannot subsist. The Apostle goes on, with his principal object in view, to show that the gifts and graces with which the different teachers were endowed were all necessary and should be collectively used. They could not dispense with the least of them; the Body of Christ needed the whole for its nourishment and support.

The English word *church* derives from the Greek *kuriakos*, “belonging to the Lord,” but it stands for another Greek word, *ekklesia* (or ecclesiastical), denoting “an assembly.” It is in this sense that the writer of Acts uses it to describe the new gathering or congregation of the disciples of Jesus Christ as belonging to the Lord (indeed His body, He being the Head). The Church is more than a congregation, more than a visible organization. The invisible Church is made up of all those who are one in Christ. Jesus Christ has only one Body, one Bride, and all divisions and differences are overcome through the power of the Blood, and the indwelling of His Spirit.

YOUR OPENER

Do I Fit?

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KEY VERSE: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. — Colossians 1:18

RESPONSES

1. Let your students respond by giving their thoughts. Bring out that the Body of Christ is also called the "Church." Ask your students to discuss just what the Church is. Their comments should develop the thought that it is made up of men and women who have given their hearts and lives to God, and are willing to be used in whatever capacity God sees fit. How do those who attend but fail to yield their lives to Christ fit into the picture?

2. Verse 18 tells us that God ordains the placement of members in the Body as it pleases Him. Discuss with your students why it is necessary that God direct in this. They should conclude that He knows the potential abilities, the personal characteristics, and the talents of each individual, as well as the weaknesses. His all-encompassing wisdom must be the basis for deciding which task each individual is best fitted to do.

3. Christ is the Head of the Body. Discuss why all members must be subordinate to the Head. Just as the brain is the controlling system of the physical body, Christ is the One who gives direction to the Body of the Church. Your students should recognize that it is impossible to be a member of the Body of Christ and not be under the authority of God's Word, for Christ is the Word made flesh. The Word is the point of reference for all questions regarding the Body of Christ.

4. The answer to this question is not clearly spelled out in the text. However, it should elicit a number of suggestions as there are many instructions in Scripture concerning faithfulness, consecration, obedience, etc. You may wish to direct your students' attention to the first part of verse 28. Help them recognize the fact that God set up those in the Body who are the governing members of the Body or Church. It is their responsibility to be on the alert for those who are consecrated and willing to do what they can for the cause of Christ, in order to help them find the place that God would have them fill.

Just as the many members of the physical body are dependent on each other, so it is with a church. The members are united and supportive of each other. Without this union no church could exist. God has given to each of us grace and ability to accomplish the work He has called us to do. But to be effective for God we must consecrate our lives to do His bidding.

1. What is meant by the phrase, *the Body of Christ*?

2. How is the decision made to determine where one fits into the Body of Christ?

3. What is the particular place that Christ fills in the Body? What is the responsibility of the members toward Christ?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. In what manner does a person develop his usefulness, and become able to accept other responsibilities as a part of the Body of Christ?

5. What part of the Body is more important than the others, apart from the Head?

6. What is the responsibility of each member toward the others?

7. List some of the ways in which the Body is benefited when all the members are working together as a unit and all fit into their respective places.

8. How does consecration help us continue to fit into the place that God has planned for us?

5. It is possible you will receive some varying opinions regarding this question. You may need to point out that God has, of course, placed some in positions of leadership and we must accord them respect and honor. However, God does honor the one who is a "good and faithful servant," no matter if his position is in leadership or in humble service unobserved by most of those around him. Ask your class to mention some areas of service around the church or among the congregation which might be unnoticed but are still important. Who cleans the church on Monday morning? Who mows the church lawn? Who gasses up the Sunday school vans? Who makes a dinner for a sick one, or takes an elderly saint grocery shopping? These may seem like small functions, but they are all important for the smooth functioning of a church and its members.

6. Your students' answers should bring out that the attitude between members should be one of mutual concern. If one member suffers they all suffer. If a member rejoices, all rejoice. The attitude also includes absolute cooperation. Discuss how, in the physical body, when one sense or function is impaired, usually another sense becomes heightened in order to compensate. Compare this to the response of the spiritual Body of the Church when one member steps in to help another who is faltering in some way.

7. The answers given may include: increased unity, greater fellowship between members, more sympathy and understanding for each other, a clearer witness to those outside of the Body of Christ, a closer relationship with Christ, progress in the work of the Lord. After your list has been made, encourage the group to talk about the ways in which these benefits can be increased.

8. As your class talks over their responses, you may wish to direct their attention to Romans 12:1. If they present their bodies a living sacrifice, they will find it necessary to continue to make consecrations even after they have initially consecrated their lives to God. For instance, if a young person was saved and received his experiences at an early age, likely he would still be called to make specific consecrations regarding job opportunities, marriage plans, service for the Lord, etc. Help the class to summarize the lesson by reinforcing the thought that if they continue faithfully in all that the Lord calls them to do, they will be usable and effective members of the Body of Christ.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What do we mean by the "Body of Christ"?

What talents has the Lord given us to use for Him? How can we develop our talents for the Lord?

List as many parts of the Body of Christ as you can.

Why is Jesus called the Head of the Body?

What other things are composed of many parts but perform as a unit?

1 Corinthians 3:16, calls a Christian's body "the temple of God." What does this mean?

Is it important to know where we fit in the Body of Christ?

What is more important than the call itself?

In the ANSWER story, how many parts to the Body of Christ did Joe say there are? How can one know if he is a part?

THINGS TO DO

Make a list of things to do to be helpful in the Body of Christ.

Ask a student to put one of his hands behind his back, then try to tie a shoe, tie a tie, etc., using his free hand. Have another student try to help using only one hand. It won't work! This illustrates we must be part of one body.

Bring a small jigsaw puzzle to class. Use it to illustrate that each piece is important. All pieces are different and have a different spot to fill. Try to work one into the wrong place; it won't work! The puzzle is not complete without all the pieces.

As you talk about how every person can be a part of the Body of Christ, have your class make a collage illustrating this. On a large piece of posterboard, write the words, "We Are Part of the Body of Christ." Have them cut pic-

tures of people from magazines. Intersperse these with pieces of colored construction paper on which you have written various jobs that can be done around the church: minister, pastor, altar worker, choir member, Sunday school teacher, prayer warrior, etc. At the conclusion of the class session, display the completed poster.

Take a clock, camera, or other object with many small parts to class. If you wish, have it partially assembled. Talk about how many of the parts are small, almost unnoticeable, yet they are important. Each one has its own function. Liken this to the Body of Christ where each one, no matter how small or unnoticed, is important and has a job to perform.

Answers for ANSWER

Each One Had a Part

Each of the people in these puzzle pieces had a special part in God's plan. Look up the Scripture in each piece and write in who the person was. Then, on the lines at the bottom of the page, write what they did.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>1 Samuel 17:49</u> <u>David</u> 2. <u>Ruth 1:16</u> <u>Ruth</u> 3. <u>Mark 1:4</u> <u>John the Baptist</u> 4. <u>John 1:40</u> <u>Andrew</u> 5. <u>1 Samuel 3:20</u> <u>Samuel</u> 6. <u>Acts 9:36</u> <u>Dorcas</u> 7. <u>Judges 4:4</u> <u>Deborah</u> 8. <u>Genesis 17:5</u> <u>Abraham</u> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Killed the giant</u> 2. <u>Followed Naomi</u> 3. <u>Baptized in the wilderness</u> 4. <u>Followed Jesus</u> 5. <u>Became a prophet of God</u> 6. <u>Did good deeds</u> 7. <u>Judged Israel</u> 8. <u>Became a father of many nations</u>
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