

Harmony

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 1st, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

~1st Corinthians 12:26 (NASB)

1) Seeking 90-lb. Weaklings

- A) In celebrating the individual parts of “Christ’s body” (1st Corinthians 12:12), Paul emphasizes the unified functioning of the individual parts for the maximum “good of the church” (12:7).
- B) The focus of the body metaphor is not how the individual parts function, but that the individual parts function together (12:14-20). The One (Christ) dominates the many (the Church).
- C) Even those who feel they have nothing to offer (12:22ff) can find encouragement that God glorifies Himself with “more abundant honor” for those who are weak.
- D) The body of Christ cannot function rightly with “Lone Ranger” servants! The great news of Christ’s church (His body), is that God works most harmoniously through the weak!

2) Unified Ministry Means Personal Care

- A) Paul provides a key outcome for all Christians by which a person can measure whether or not there is an authentic mutuality (unity) within Christ's body (the church).
- B) As has already been established (12:4-24), the purpose of our mutual submission to Christ in our service is to provide unity (no schisms, 12:25).
- C) However, a lack of schisms in the church should not be measured by a certain level of argument or agreement (cf. Acts 15:36-40; Galatians 2:11-14). Rather, the true measure of unified ministry in the church should be measured by how much we personally care about one another.
- D) The measure of schisms is not agreement/disagreement, but whether we have "the same care" for one another in the church. Do we care? When the church suffers, do we care? When the church succeeds, do we care?

3) Suffering & Honoring Together

- A) Are there dangerous divisions (schisms) in our church? Simply, we can measure this by evaluating our "care quotient." Do we authentically care when one suffers or succeeds (12:26).
- B) Like a family, if one suffers, we all suffer. If one succeeds (is honored), we all succeed. This is true of our human bodies, and it is true of the church.
- C) Is your unity with Christ so strong that when one of your brothers/sisters in Christ suffers, it hurts you? When one succeeds, do you also celebrate? Do we care with this kind of passion