

WE GROW TOGETHER

We grow into spiritual maturity by God's power and according to God's design...His design for our growth is the Church.

1. THE CHURCH IS

1 John 1:1-3, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

John 17:11, Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

John 17:20-21, I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- Fellowship (koinonia): A shared life and participation in community centered around what believers have in common.
- The life we have in common is the life of God!
- As believers we are partnered and linked inseparably with God through Christ...
- And because of that union we each have in Christ, we are therefore linked inseparably together with each forever.

2. THE CHURCH IS A

Romans 12:4-5, For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1Corinthians 12:27, Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

THERE IS UNITY IN THE BODY:

1Corinthians 12:12-13, For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- We are all saved into one body through one faith and one Lord.
- x It is by the work of Christ and the gift of grace that we are brought into His body.

THERE IS DIVERSITY IN THE BODY:

1Corinthians 12:14, For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

1Corinthians 12:15, If 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.

1Corinthians 12:21-22, The 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." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable...

- x Every part of the body is placed uniquely with infinite care, thought, and precision.
- When every part is placed with care by God, the result is that every part is needed and every part is worth the care given to it.

THE HEAD OF THE BODY IS CHRIST:

Colossians 1:18, And he [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

- The body is nothing without the head.
- The body can only move and have life because of the head.
- The head is always giving instructions to every part on how we move together as a body that message is that you have been gifted and placed in the body to serve.

3. THE MOST WAY

1Corinthians 12:31b, ...And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

We can't talk about the body of Christ without talking about the most excellent way - love.

1Corinthians 12:25-26, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

- May be no division: Even though we are saved into oneness, the body can experience division because of a lack of care within the body.
- **Same care for one another:** If one part suffers, the entire body feels it and responds.

THE WAY OF LOVE IN THE BODY:

- **Pray for each other:** Ephesians 6:18b, ...be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.
- ★ Bear one another's burdens: Galatians 6:2, Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
- Share what you have: Hebrews 13:16, Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
- ★ Put others first: Romans 12:10, Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.
- Reflect Christ to each other: Ephesians 4:32, Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.