

Second Purpose of the Church: Ministry to One Another

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[0:00] The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all its parts are many, they form one body, so it is with Christ.

For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one spirit to drink.

Now the body is not made up of one part, but of many. If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

And if the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body, it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

[1:07] The eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you. And the head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you. On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.

And the parts that we think are less honorable, we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty. While our presentable parts need no special treatment.

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it. So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now, you are the body of Christ.

And each one of you is a part of it. Well, everything that God has made has a purpose. From your eyelashes to the church that Jesus Christ is building.

[2:18] So what is that purpose for the church on earth? Why does the church exist? Well, in the first place, we saw that it exists to glorify the triune God in public worship.

God wants his people to gather together and to adore and praise and to hear him. And so the most important thing about this gathering in his name is that God is here.

And he has something to say to us in the scriptures. Something to show us of his glory. And so we acknowledge his presence and we acknowledge his greatness by putting ourselves under his preached word.

And we hear it preached with awe and reverence for it. Isaiah says we tremble at the word. But we also rejoice in it.

We thrill at it. We enjoy God in the preaching of the word. And then we pour out our love and praise in response by our prayers and our songs.

[3:35] The worship of God is fundamental to why we exist as a church. And it also brings glory and pleasure to God himself.

And so that's what we're doing right now. Seeking to bring glory and pleasure to him in worship. But the Bible reveals a second purpose of the church.

And that is to minister to one another. With our talents, our spiritual gifts, our graces. Through those Christian responsibilities that we have to each other.

And so we've turned this morning from considering our purpose as a church. From the upward direction to worship God to the inward direction.

The one another. That our purpose is to minister to one another. Now you remember when God made the first man Adam. He said it is not good for the man to be alone.

[4:37] So I will make a helper for him. Suitable to him. And so God took from his side a rib and created Eve. And brought her to the man to be his helper.

And so God created the institution of the family. To mutually help husband and wife. And in a similar way. When the Lord Jesus by his saving grace.

Makes a disciple of his. He says in essence. It's not good for this disciple to be alone. So I will make a helper suitable to him.

And he instituted the church. Local churches. And so he takes those individual disciples. And he joins them together in local assemblies.

That we might be mutually helped. As we minister the one to another. Now that's Christ's plan. For every disciple of his.

[5:43] To be baptized and added to the church. Where there are some older Christians. And some younger Christians. Some outgoing ones.

And some shy ones. Some richer. Some poor. Some more spiritually mature. And some not so mature. A place where we splash sin on each other.

And he put us into such imperfect churches. That we might both minister. And be ministered to. So that. We all might grow up.

Into the full measure of likeness to Jesus Christ. That's the goal. God wants this earth to have a testimony. To the glory of Jesus Christ.

And he says you'll see it in my church. Therefore he calls us to minister. To one another. Now this ministry to one another. Is reflected in one of the apostle Paul's.

[6:40] Favorite expressions for the church. The body of Christ. He refers to the body of Christ. In which the church is the body.

And Christ is the head. And in many of his letters. The apostle teaches us important things. About the church. By comparing it to the human body.

And this morning. That's our aim. To set before you some lessons. On ministering to one another. In the body of Christ. As illustrated by the way. Our physical body works.

And this is one of those places. Where the preacher doesn't need to seek for illustrations. The very term itself. Is the illustration. You are. Church.

The body. The body. Of Christ. So. Number one. Many parts. Make up one body. We're going to work mainly out of 1 Corinthians 12.

[7:37] So if we turn other places. Keep your place here. Because we're coming back. Notice verses 12 and 13. Many parts. Make up one body.

Is the first lesson. The body is a unit. Though it is made up of many parts. And though all its parts. Are many. They form.

One body. He says it. A couple different ways. Doesn't he? So it is. With Christ. Here's the application to you. The body of Christ. For we were all baptized.

By one spirit. Into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks. Slave or free. And we were all given the one spirit to drink. So we look first at the physical body.

And we notice that there are many. Parts. To the one body. There are some. Parts that are outside. Some that are inside. There's some that are big.

[8:35] Some that are small. But each part. Is a member of something bigger. Than itself. It belongs to a bigger. Body.

And the part. Is never known. Or appreciated. Unless it is seen. In relation to the rest of the body. You'll never appreciate the value. Of any one part.

Unless you see. Its relationship. To the whole. Now. Kids. Let's just. Suppose. For a minute. That there are. Extraterrestrial beings.

Or. Let me say. Some Martians. Out there. It's just. For pretend. I don't believe that. But. Just pretend. There are Martians. And when they first visited. Our planet Earth.

The first thing they found. Was an ear. On the ground. And they went over. And they picked it up. And they examined it. And said. This is a rather strange thing. And they turned it.

[9:31] Every which way. And they studied it. Now. How much do they know. About the ear. Well. Very little. But then. They meet a human being.

For the first time. And they see that we have two of these things. One on each side of our head. And they. Study the ear. In relation to the whole body. And they come to understand. What the rest of the body does for it. And what it does. For the rest of the body. And only then.

Do they really understand. Its function. Its purpose. And therefore. Its value. No part of the body. Is rightly understood.

When viewed in isolation. From the rest. It's to be seen as. A part of a greater whole. And so it is.

[10 : 28] In the body of Christ. Believers. This same principle. Is to shape the way. We think about ourselves. We are to think about ourselves.

Not individualistically. But collectively. To see ourselves. As a part. Of a greater whole. The body. Of Christ. Here. And getting ourselves. To think in that way. Is no small thing. Do you think of yourself. In that way. Or do you just think of yourself.

When meeting with. In premarital counseling. We cover this. That as two human beings. Come together in marriage. That's a hard thing. To start. Stop thinking individualistically. And to start thinking.

As together. And it's true of the church as well. We're so prone to thinking of ourselves. That we fail to think. Of ourselves collectively. Do you think of yourself.

[11 : 24] Do you think of yourself. In this way. I'm not here on my own. To live out the Christian life. I belong to this. Body of Christ. And if you're not thinking that way.

There will be distortion. In your life. There has to be. Because you're not thinking of yourself. In context. With reality. The way it really is. The way God created you.

And made you to be. One of the body. The part. Of a greater whole. And so that view of ourselves. Will have important.

Practical effects. Upon our church life. As we'll see. I am one. Of the many parts. Of this greater body. All right.

That's the first lesson. The second lesson. Is that different. Different parts of the body. Have different functions. To fulfill. Romans 12.

[12 : 19] 4 to 6. Says. Just as each of us. Has one body. With many members. And these members. Do not all have. The same function. So in Christ.

We who are many. Form one body. And each member. Belongs to all the others. We have different gifts. According to the grace. Given us.

So this again. Is another obvious lesson. From the body. That. Not all parts of the body. Are the same. The body is not a collection. Of ears.

There's also eyes. And hands. And feet. And kidneys. And lungs. And they're different. And they have different jobs. For which they were uniquely.

Formed by God. They don't all have. The sense of hearing. Do they? Well in the same way. Members of Christ's body. The church. Do not all have.

[13 : 13] The same function. In the body. You see that. In verses four to six. Of our text. First Corinthians 12. Four to six. That there are different. Kinds of gifts. There are different.

Kinds of service. Different kinds of working. Oh but there's the same spirit. The same Lord. The same God. Who works. Them all. Works in all of them.

And it's because of these different parts. And their different functions. In the whole body. That. The life of grace fellowship.

Is so enriched. Because of those differences. The third lesson. Every part exists for the good. Of all the other parts.

Verse seven. Now to each one. And if you're a member of the church. You need to see yourself there. Each one. To each one. The manifestation of the spirit.

[14 : 12] Is given. For the common good. Each part is given something. To contribute. To the good of the rest of the body parts. So think about the ears.

Contribution. To the whole body. The body is running. And the ear hears a shout. Stop or I'll shoot. And because the ear is doing its job.

The whole body lives. And lives to give thanks for ears. It. It was for the common good of the body. That the ear perform.

Or like a toddler. Reaching up to the stove. To that boiling pan. Of water. And his ear hears. Don't touch. And the rest of his body.

Is served by the work. Of his ears. All the parts are better off. For that one part. Or two parts. Doing their job.

[15:12] Well even so. Your gift. Your service. Your working. In the body of Christ. Was given by God to you. For the common good. Of the whole. Body.

So you need to think of yourself. And your gifts. And your service. In that way. God wants to bless this church.

So he gave you something. To contribute. To its overall. Good. To its health. And life. Your gifts. Exist not for yourself.

But for the common good. Your talents. Your grace. Your money. Your time. All that you are and have. Exists not for yourself. But for the common good.

Sometimes I order paper. For the church. And I have it delivered. To my home address. Since I have no office here. And the package.

[16:08] Comes to my door. With the label. And it says. To Grace Fellowship Church. In care of. John Heaney. 2956. Redwood Court. And so on. And though the paper.

Comes to my door. It's not for me. It's for you. And that's why. You have some notes. On paper. This morning. It was.

Brought to me. But it was. For you. Now. In the same way. God has brought. Gifts of grace. To my door. To my heart. To my mind. He has given me.

Abilities to preach. And to pastor. A calling. A function. To fulfill. And I must never think. For a moment. That this is just. Meant for me. No.

The label. On my gifts. Reads. To Grace Fellowship Church. For the. Common. Good. Of the body. And the same.

[17:09] Thing is true. Of you. The very. Same. Thing is true. Of you. Every one. Of you. Who are a part. Of this church. Your gifts. And grace. And God given.

Abilities. Have the label. On them. For Grace Fellowship Church. For their. Common. Good. For to each. One. The manifestation.

Of the spirit. Is given. For the common. Good. Now if you view. Your abilities. And your gifts. That way. It will affect. What you do. With them. That's the third. Lesson.

Every part. Exists for the good. Of all the other parts. And then the fourth lesson. The parts of the body. Are dependent. Upon.

One another. They are dependent. Upon. One another. No one part.

[18:03] Can survive. Without the others. That ear. Cannot survive. On the ground. Can it? Without the others. This. And that's not accidental. It's not a random result. Of an evolutionary process.

But it's the intentional design. Of God. The creator. Who knit us together. In our mother's womb. Notice verse 18. God has arranged.

God has arranged. The parts. In the body. He's talking about. The physical body. There's a spiritual application. But first. He's talking about. The physical body. God has arranged. The parts. In the body. Every one of them.

Just as he wanted them to be. And he wanted them. To need each other. He. He wanted them. And arranged them. To be dependent. Upon each other. For their life. And health.

So that the eye. Needs the hand. And the head. Needs the feet. And they all need the heart. And the heart. Needs the lungs. And the lungs. Need the heart. And so on. And so forth. We're fearfully.

[19:01] And wonderfully. Made. Like an intricate machine. That has. Millions of gears. And they're all interlocking. And one touches. Upon another.

And affects the other. And none of the parts. Were ever meant. To live. On their own. Now this mutual dependence.

Upon one another. Is also true. In the body of Christ. In the church. God has not given. All the abilities. Needed. To any one member.

But he spread them out. Over the whole church. Body. The church is his new creation. Fearfully. And wonderfully. Made.

And he's made it. With the same interdependence. That is seen. In the physical body. Now I suppose. If he had wanted to. The Lord could have devised. Each Christian. So that.

[19:57] All the grace. That we need. Came directly. From God. To us. That we were. Fully. Equipped. With all the gifts. And graces. Needed. Just directly.

Just me. And the Lord. But instead. Of making us. Islands. To ourselves. He has purposefully. He has intentionally. Put some of the grace.

That I need. Out there. In the local church. In other parts. Of the body. Where we need.

One another. You. You. You. You. You. You have something. That I need. And I have something. That you need. And where.

He has deposited grace. In others. That we all need. Now. That does not. Belittle. The sufficiency. Of Christ. It does not.

[20 : 51] In any way. Diminish. The reality. That. Jesus. Is all. I need. It rather. Just recognizes. In underscores.

The truth. That much. Of Christ's grace. To me. Much. Of that fullness. Of grace. That is in Jesus Christ. For me. Comes to me. Through you. Through other members.

Who are channels. Of his grace. Indeed. That is what these gifts are called. Grace. A portion to you. As he is determined. And as you faithfully carry out your service.

I get the spiritual profit. From the Lord. Who is the all sufficient one. For me. So this interdependence. Of the members of the church. Is intentional.

Intentional. And by design. That is the way God wanted it. That is the way God arranged it. To be in his body. And that carries huge implications for us.

[21 : 52] Namely in how we view ourselves. And how we view others. In the body. We want to look at those two things. First of all. How we view ourselves. And here is the point.

No member of the church. Should look down on their own role. In the body of Christ. If what we have seen is true. Then. No part of this body of Christ.

Can ever diminish. And look down. And belittle. Their own contribution. To the greater whole. Now. Paul deals with this. In verses 15 through 20. It's easy for us.

To compare our gifts with others. And so to come away. Belittling our own. Well I can't teach or preach. So. I guess. I'm not needed in the church.

Nothing for me. To do here. Because I'm only a foot. And not a hand. I don't belong to the body. Because I'm only an ear. And not an eye. I'm not needed. Paul says rubbish.

[22 : 54] Paul says if all were eyes. Where would the sense of hearing be? And if all were one part. Where would the whole body be? Verse 18 reminds us.

Remember. God has arranged the parts in the body. Every one of them. Just as he wanted them to be. He knows. How to bless his church. And he gifts every individual in his church.

Just as he wants that to be. So don't argue with him. Don't belittle your gift. And your place in the body of Christ. Embrace the importance of your contribution to the body.

And give yourself. Holy to it. There are no unnecessary parts. In the body. Now.

You may not know. But there is a gene in your cells. That we call the P53. Gene. It's just a little thing.

[24 : 00] In fact. It's too small to even see with the naked eye. And that little gene might. Get to feeling a bit insignificant. Compared to. The other major organs.

Of the heart. And the liver. And the lungs. And so. It's job. In the body. Is to cause old cells.

To die off. And then to replenish them. With new. Cells. But if it says. Because I'm not a heart. Or a kidney. Therefore I'm not needed here. And it starts sloughing off.

And doesn't do its job. Well then. The old cells. Don't die. When they're supposed to. And. The new cells form.

Even though the body. Doesn't need them. And these extra cells. Can keep growing. And can spread to other organs. And start consuming. Their resources. And leave those organs.

[24 : 55] To die. We call it cancer. And we want to say. To P53. We need you. Keep working.

You're not insignificant. You're fulfilling. An important function. In my body. Even though you're just. A little guy. And I want to say to you.

Whoever you are. If you are a member. Of this body. Then you have something. That we need. God says so. There are no. Unnecessary parts.

In the body of Christ. Either. There. But you say. The church seems to be getting on. Okay. Without me. Oh don't say that.

The church seems to be surviving. Though I'm not doing much of anything. Don't say that. Just think. How much better off. The church would be. If all the parts.

[25 : 52] Were operating. At a hundred percent. It would be revival. It would be vibrancy of life. It would be growth. It would be health. For the whole body.

And what glory. Would come. To Jesus Christ. The head. Of such a body. You see. God has deposited grace. In you.

And he expects you to use it. For the common good. Of the body. We had it in Sunday school. First Peter 4.10. Each one. Each one. Should use.

Whatever gift. He has received. To serve others. Faithfully administering. God's grace. In its various forms. You have been given. God's grace.

And you're supposed to be. A good steward of it. That means you're going to. Give an account one day. For the grace. God has given you. And how do you be. A good steward. Of that grace. You use it to serve. The rest of the body.

[26 : 51] What if P53. P53. Was no more active. In your body. Than you are. In this body. What if that was an equation. That P53.

Worked. To the same degree. You work. In this body. Don't diminish. The importance. Of your ministry. Here. In the body.

Of Christ. All this church. Is blessed. With many. Who live. With their sleeves. Rolled up. And get at it.

Serving the body. Of Christ. It's a beautiful thing. To behold. It's a glory. To Christ. The head. May you. Continue. To find joy. In serving.

The body. Of Christ. And I'm thankful. That you don't expect. Your pastors. To do. All of the work. Even most of the work. At Grace Fellowship. You know. There are churches. That way.

[27 : 47] And they say. Well we pay the pastor. So let them do it. That's what we pay them for. Turn to Ephesians 4. We're coming back. But. Over to Ephesians 4. And.

Here. The apostle. Is talking about. Gifts. That Christ. The ascended Lord. Having gone up to heaven. Pours out. His grace. And his gifts. Upon his church.

And he says. In. Verse 11. He talks about. Some of these. Gifts. That he gives to the church. Apostles. Prophets. Evangelists. Pastors.

And teachers. It's. Those last two. Are probably. Speaking of. One in the same office. And what are. Pastors. And what are pastors. And teachers. To do.

Well first. Notice what. Our job is not. It's not to do. All the works of service. Rather. As verse 12 says. These pastor. Teachers. Are to prepare you. God's people.

[28 : 45] For works of service. So that the body of Christ. May be built up. So why do pastors. Exist. Not to do.

All the works of service. In the church. But to prepare you. To do works of service. To what end. That the body might be built up. You see. Body building. Is not for a few. It's for all. Body building. In the church. Is to be the activity.

Of all. The parts of the body. And it is. Only built up. As each part. Does its work.

Notice verse. Sixteen. From him. Ephesians 4. Sixteen. Having spoken of Christ. The head. Of the body. From him. The whole body.

[29 : 41] Joined. And held together. By every supporting ligament. Grows. And builds. Itself. Up in love. As each part. Does. Its work.

Only. As each part. Does its work. Will the body of Christ. Grow and thrive. As Christ. Intends for it. As I do my work. And as you do your work. As I do my work. And equip you.

And prepare you. To do your works of service. The whole body. Is built up. But you see. Christ. Expects. A hundred percent. Involvement.

Each part. No. No. P-53. Sleeping on the job. Everybody. A hundred percent. I sometimes wonder. If we think of it that way. If the preacher. Decided to sleep in. And do some other things. On Sunday morning. And didn't show up. Would the rest of the body. Be affected. Well yeah.

[30 : 40] You acknowledge that. If you. Decided. To do something else. On Sunday morning. Would the rest of the body. Be affected. If you said yes to me.

You have to say yes to you. Because each part. Is needed. To do its work. If the body of Christ. Is to be built. Up. Don't diminish.

Your own. Important. Contribution. To the body. Of Christ. And we build each other up. In love. It's love. That motivates us.

To lay ourselves out. In service. To one another. That love. That Christ has. For his church. It works in us. And through us. To one another.

Now. That's the first thing. Our view. Towards ourselves. And our own gifts. We cannot belittle. Our own role. In the body of Christ. But secondly. Also. No member of the church.

[31 : 38] Should look down. On the other members. And their gifts. And Paul deals with this. In verses 21 to 26. Back in. First Corinthians 12. You cannot.

Belittle. Other people. And their gifts either. If you. Understand. What has been said. Now that was a problem. In the church. At Corinth. Life. And it was causing. Divisions among them.

Some of them were proud. Of their spiritual gifts. I can speak in tongues. I can. I can preach. I can do this. I can do that. And they were. Looking down their noses.

At other people. Who. Whose gifts were not so flashy. And not so visible. And they began to think of them. In unloving ways. And diminishing their importance.

In the body. Thinking they have little. To contribute. To the body of Christ. Certainly nothing. To contribute. To me. And Paul says.

[32 : 35] In verse 21. The eye cannot say. To the hand. I don't need you. The eye cannot say. One member of the body. Cannot say. My job is so important.

To the body. Look at me. Mr. Eyeball. And what are you? A hand. A hunk of flesh. And phalanges. I don't need you.

But just let the eye. Get something in it. And it'll be screaming. For help. From one of those hands. Won't it? The eye cannot say. To the hand. I don't need you.

And the head. Cannot say. To the feet. I don't need you. Look at you down there. With your silly. Ten toes. You don't measure up to me. Way up here.

I can get along just fine without you. But as soon as fire breaks out in the house. The head is shouting for the feet. Quick. Get us out of here. Please. Because the head can never say to the feet.

[33 : 35] I don't need you. You see. We do need each other. And it's only pride that says otherwise. And pride in spiritual gifts is not something that died out with the Corinthian church.

It's sadly all too alive and well in churches today. And the greater the gifts. The greater the temptation. To be proud about them. And to look down upon others.

Who don't have such gifts. There is no one in this church. That does not need the contribution of other members of the church.

When we realize it's God who has gifted and combined each of the members of the body. We can't say I don't need you. We can't say that can we?

When we say or even think of another member in the church. I don't need him. I don't need her.

What are we saying? We're saying I don't need the grace of God.

[34 : 37] That he has put into him. And into her to bring to me. What arrogance. Such should prepare for a fall. As if I'm the giver.

The great giver. With nothing to receive. From God through my brethren. We need to be as hungry to receive from our brethren. As we are to give to them.

Some of my favorite times in this church are Wednesday nights. And I grow immensely as I hear my brethren pour out their hearts in prayer to God.

I just want to tell you that. I go home with one foot in heaven. I grow. I grow. I grow. From the prayers of my brothers. I grow.

Sitting here and hearing all of you. Sing. The praises of Jesus. I grow. Seeing others sacrificially serving. One another in the body of Christ.

[35 : 40] I grow. Hearing. You tell me what God is doing in your life. And sharing. From the scriptures. What God is teaching you. I grow from that. I grow.

Bearing your burdens. And having you bear mine. I need you. I need you. I need you. Because you bring grace from Christ to me.

And so we dare not diminish our own gifts. And we dare not diminish other members gifts. And contribution to the body.

God highly values all his members. Do you know Jesus died for each one of them? He went to the hellish cross to take the punishment of every single member of his church.

And he highly values his members. And the grace that he's put into them. The gifts. The abilities that he's put into them. He values that. Even if nobody else does.

[36:41] It's his grace after all. And so God has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it. Verse 24 says. So there's that woman faithfully cleaning the church.

Week in, week out. There's that lady visiting the shut-ins. Others helping and encouraging. There's the man quietly going about his business of serving the church.

And no one knows the long hours he puts in. There's that member pouring out their heart in prayer for the rest of the body of Christ. And earth does not mention it.

And it's forgotten and unseen. But not by the Lord in heaven. He sees what is done in secret. Even in service of his body.

He says, look. Have you seen my servant blank? Have you seen the way she's serving me out of love? Serving one another in the body.

[37:38] My body, the bride. Oh, unheralded by men. But precious to me. I see everything that she's doing. One day I'm going to reward her openly.

And so God has intentionally designed the church in this way. Where we all need each other. And it ought to root out our pride.

Nobody can say, I don't need you. So we must humbly acknowledge our dependence upon one another under the Lord. He does it this way.

So that there should be no division. Verse 25. So that there should be no division in the body. I don't need you. Don't need you. I only need these. I only need. No division in the body. But that its part should have equal concern for each other.

Equal concern. So if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. And when our sisters lost their husbands, you suffered with them.

[38:43] That's the way it's supposed to be. And when new believers stand and give us their testimony and go into the waters of baptism, we rejoice with them, don't we?

If one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Calvin says, let no one wish to be anything for himself. But let us all be whatever we are for the benefit of each other.

Don't try to be anything for yourself. But whatever you are, be for the benefit of each other. So if I'm thinking rightly about myself and others in the body of Christ, two convictions will grow and grip me. Number one, I need them because of what Christ has given them. And number two, they need me because of what Christ has given me. All right. Three closing applications and we're done.

Ministry to one another in the body of Christ. This is our purpose as a church. Let's remember this. Why do we exist? Worship God and then to minister to each other.

[39:43] And ministry to one another in the body of Christ, number one, requires us to become involved in one another's lives. The body metaphor will not allow us to remain unattached and aloof from the rest of the body.

To live our lives in isolation. You know, the New Testament gives members of Christ's church at least 20 things that we are to do to one another.

We saw some in 1 Peter this morning. Let me just give them quickly. Love one another. Live in harmony with one another. Accept one another. Sing to one another. Encourage one another.

Spur on one another. Instruct one another. Be devoted to one another. Have equal concern for one another. Confess your sins to one another. Pray for one another. Forgive one another. Offer hospitality to one another.

Esteem one another. Bear the burdens of one another. Serve one another. Be kind and compassionate to one another. Submit to one another. Greet one another. Build up one another.

Fellowship with one another.

[40:43] And the truth is we simply cannot fulfill those responsibilities as members of a church. In isolation from the rest of the body.

You see, each of these call us to be actively seeking involvement in one another's lives and opening ourselves up to one another in the body of Christ.

And it's with that in mind that we're commanded not to give up meeting together with God's people as some are in the habit of doing. Why should you not want to miss the gatherings of God's people?

Well, because we've missed the preached word. True enough. But, you know, that's not what Hebrews hones in on in Hebrews chapter 10 and verses 24 and 25 where it tells us that and commands us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

You know what it hones in on? You know what it's pointing to? Why we can't give up meeting together? It's because of the one anothering that takes place there. Let us consider how we can

spur one another on to loving good deeds.

[41 : 50] And let us encourage one another and exhort one another all the more as we see the day approaching. Oh, yes, if we didn't come, we wouldn't hear the preacher spurring us on.

But neither would we receive Sister Sue's prodding. And Brother Jim's prodding. And this encouragement and that.

And they wouldn't receive it from me. So when I'm tempted to neglect the gatherings of the church or to remain unconnected and uninvolved in the church, I must remember these two things.

If I stay away, I will not gain from Christ what he has given to my brethren to give to me. And they will not receive from me what God intends to give to them through me.

It's a double robbery. We rob ourselves and we rob others. The story is told of a man who had habitually absented himself from the gatherings of the church.

[42 : 56] And the minister paid him a visit to correct this deficiency in his life. And upon being welcomed into the house, the minister, without saying a word, went over to the fireplace where a fire was burning.

And he took the poker and he went into the pile of red coals and he just separated out one coal. And he put it out over here away from the rest. And what was once red and bright slowly diminished into a dull black.

And he just stood there and stared at it. And he took the poker and he slid it back over beside all the other glowing coals.

And then he stared at it. And as they watched, that black hole started to turn orange again. Red hot. Red hot. And the minister put the poker down.

Went to the door and left without a word. Leaving the parishioner to consider the message. There is one another that goes on.

[44 : 04] There is heat from the lively coals that spurs us on. You know that. I know I'm not telling you anything new. You receive that. You go home warmer because you've been with your brothers and sisters.

And the worship of God. And that's why. Hebrews says, don't take on the habit of some.

And neglect the assembling of God's people. Before the services. After the services. Actively seek out others for fellowship. It's as we share our burdens with each other.

As we look into the eyes of our sister. And we see her share her burden. That that burden becomes ours. And we together bear it up to the throne of grace. It's when someone in need gives us the opportunity to serve them.

That we learn that it's indeed more blessed to give than to receive. It's in this interaction. That we learn. How does my brother need to be encouraged? How does my sister need to be encouraged?

[45 : 07] You don't learn that apart from each other. You learn it when in the holy huddle of the assembly of God's people. We come together and we share these things with each other. Loving one another is not something we learn playing solitaire.

One another in ministry requires plentiful interaction within the body of Christ. So I ask you. Do you need to make some changes with regard to your schedule regarding the meetings of God's people? And then beyond that. Are there other ways that you can get with God's people? Maybe you could determine. We want to have a family in in April. That we might get to know one another better.

Why? So that we can fulfill this second purpose for which we exist as a church. To minister to one another. And so to bring glory to Christ.

Well, the second application. Ministry to one another is fueled by worship. And here we see how the first purpose of the church equips us for the second purpose.

[46 : 10] It is in the worship of God that the word of God is preached. And the preaching of the word is to prepare you for works of service. So that the body of Christ might be built up.

In worship, we learn truths that will enable us to encourage one another with these words. In worship, we draw near to him who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

In worship, we behold the Lord of glory. Stooping and serving. And washing the feet of his disciples. And we learn from him.

We become like him. And serve one another and wash one another's feet. It's getting close to him that we find our hearts strangely moved. To forget about ourselves and only think of our interest.

And to think instead about the interest of others. In worship, I see God forgiving and being patient with me. And there I learn to forgive one another and to be patient with one another.

[47:16] In worship, we have the motives of our hearts stirred to minister as Christ says, whatever you did for the least of these my brothers you've done unto me.

And oh, it's in worship then. In so many ways that worship prepares us for ministry to one another. This is what we need and this is what happens, is it not?

In the worship of God. And then lastly, ministry to one another depends upon our remaining vitally connected to the head. Jesus Christ, Ephesians 4, 16 says, From him, from him, the head, the whole body grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

Colossians speaks of someone who has lost connection with the head. You know, that's not a good scene when the body loses connection with the head. And it's no good in the body of Christ either. It's from him that we receive all grace to build one another up.

We don't have anything to give to our brothers and sisters that doesn't come from him. Apart from him, there will be no growth and maturity and life and health in the body. And so in all of our ministries, we must be looking to him for grace and receiving from him more grace.

[48:32] Again, this day, Lord, I need more grace that we might serve in the strength that God supplies. So that in all things, God might receive the praise through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs all glory and all power forever and ever.

Amen. Let's pray. Father in heaven, when we were in need of a savior, you sent your son and he gave himself the Lord of glory to stoop and to take our punishment, to take our sins on himself and to serve us by giving us his righteousness.

How can we ever thank you? You tell us, Lord Jesus, to thank you by serving your people. So help us that even this day would find us ministering to one another and so bringing glory to Christ the head who has supplied us with every grace that we need to do so.

To the end that the whole body of Christ might grow up into the fullness of likeness to him. We ask it for your glory and praise. In Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.