

<b>Topic</b>	Members in Community
<b>Reference</b>	1-Cor 12:12-31
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I am going to be a bit more technical today and technical in the sense of music as well as an analogy. So for those who are musicians and appreciate music, possibly you are going to get something more today and those who are not you can work harder and be a musician. Anyway the point is, do you know that the trinity is a community, have you ever realized that. I think one of the best picture and analogy of the trinity can only be shown through music.

I am a fan of Jazz. My master's degree is in Jazz performance and I really love Jazz. So in Jazz if you actually understand Jazz really well, there is this part where they start improvising and in a basic trio, a trio that is made out of a lead instrument, a base and drums. In a basic trio like that, each instrument begins to take turns to improvise and during the process of it, when you are playing with great musicians, it is really fun.

When I was doing my masters and I graduated I had to do my final recital and it was so fun playing with the musicians that are professionals, and we come, rehearse half an hour and that's it, I can go in for my graduation recital, but here we practice until 11 o'clock. Anyway the process is that, they go into this part where they improvise. Now when you watch this band, the George Duke trio and I want you to watch as they improvise. It is like the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### Music playing...

Each person takes time to improvise. Actually, it is not just out of the blue, there is a certain form and there is a certain rhythm. You notice that they are playing in time all the time and they can follow each other's time exactly. So it begins with George Duke doing his solo and there is a form that is going through, maybe you can't see the form but actually the form is structured. It works and it is always like that. And anyway after he does that, you notice the basest starts doing his solo and when he was doing his solo, do you realize that the rest of the instruments went backwards and they were playing very-very simple and we have this term that when we play, it is called 'comping'.

So when I went to music college and then the lecturer said, "do you ever know what is meaning of comping" and I was like "no, I just know comping is playing chords". Comping actually comes from the word complimenting, but they don't want to say complimenting, it is too long, musicians are lazy, so they just say comping. They complement each other so well that, you know, when one takes the lead, the other compliments by playing is complimentary to the next person and it is like that. This term of this trinity dancing in Unison is called perichoresis. This dance of love between the three people, just like Dr. Peter was talking about dance. The amazing part is that until today we don't have a dance that really can depict this as beautiful as it should be but it is



like three of them as one and I think that dance goes on in the band. They are talking to each other. You notice that they are playing things and when something is interesting the next person kind of rides on that and they seem to be conversing without you knowing what is happening and so much so that is the dance of the trinity. The different roles, one is supposed to play the base, one is supposed to play the drums, one is supposed to play the keyboards, they understand those roles and it is given.

George Dukes gets a drummer because he wants a drummer. A trio won't be a trio if we try to put, maybe a guitarist for a drummer. You won't get the same effect. Everybody knows their role and each role is seen as a gift to each other. You notice, they don't like, why are you playing like that, why are you doing that. They really enjoy each other's playing. As they are playing and they say each other and when a person play something nice, they are like "wow!". That's what I think the trinity is like. When Jesus died on the cross, it was not like a solo show, God was there, the Holy Spirit was there and these roles were given freely to this and God said, this is your role, Jesus knows his role.

Let's say maybe, God is the keyboardist, Jesus is the basest and the Holy Spirit is the drummer. But anyway George Duke says this is your role and you play within your role. The basest doesn't try to be a keyboardist, the drummer doesn't try to be a basest. These roles, we know, what we are playing and who plays the melody, the keyboard and so in the same way that's the role that God sovereignly decide, and each person is so happy to play it. They just enjoy their roles because together they make music.

So they dance so beautifully together they are inexplicably one. We are working hard to be one. We want to dance so beautifully that you don't remember the band, that you remember Jesus Christ, but anyway it was this image of community that we were made, because when God saw man and he said, it is not good to be alone. It is because man was not a community alone. It was impossible to be community alone and God said, look the dance that we have, we want to see our creation also have. And so this is what we are supposed to look like. Members of the community supposed to reflect this triunity that is happening. We have to reflect this dance of love through community.

So what you need to know is that community is nonnegotiable thing in our Christian belief. If we say we don't believe in community, means we actually don't believe in God because God is community. The gifts we are given are made for community, not for individual exploitation. God sovereignly gives to the community differences and made us diverse. So that is what we learn. Everybody is given different gifts and that's beautiful because if everybody was as good looking as me it is not good already then I am not good looking anymore.

Let me give you an overview of how Paul sees this. He begins with talking about:

1. One Body, Many Parts (v12-18) - Diversity
2. Many Parts, One Body (v19-22) - Unity
3. Christian Community Honors the Weak (v23-25)
4. Unity in Diversity (v26-31)



So he starts off with saying

*12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*

We are one body. There is no other body and I think this is also often misinterpreted in just the context of the church, but that's only when we say the creeds, there is one holy catholic church. That does not mean there is only one catholic church. It means we are all part of one holy catholic church. Catholic means united. So we are all one body in Christ.

*13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

It means our shared salvation through the spirit makes us one. We are saved by the same spirit. The Catholics are saved by the same spirit, whether you believe it or not. As a pastor, I don't know how many times parents have come to me, "oh no my daughter or son is dating a catholic". I am like, they are dating a Christian what is the problem. We are baptized by the same spirit. We are baptized into the body by the same spirit, believe it or not we are all orthodox Christians. The difference is maybe if they are Mormons or something or they are Muslims or Buddhists, perhaps that is more concern for us because they are not part of the same body, but why have we divided ourselves by denominations, not only denominations Paul was talking here that people were dividing by race, by social economic status.

I was in America and I was studying and I was asking, why are the churches predominantly white, predominantly black, we see some mixtures of them in very urban centers like Washington DC or maybe New York but the rest of the country is predominantly, and then you notice that there are rich white churches and then there are middle class white churches and then there are poor churches which usually are black and then I ask, why is it that after all these years as Christians we cannot and the worst part of it, the churches are just literally a stone throw away, literally on the same street, you would have three different churches and usually the poorer ones are the charismatic and the Pentecostal. Why? And then there is H2. Why have we divided our worship in terms of the children worship there, youth worship there, adult worship here. Have you ever asked the question? Why don't we worship together?

If we are one and we are one in the body, why doesn't the one body worship together. We are all one because of the same work of God but let's continue on and I will talk about that a bit more later. It then says

*14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 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 stop being part of the body. 17 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?*

The community has to be made out of different individuals who has been given different gifts by God. Imagine if this church can only smell, all of us are blind, nobody is going to lead us into this

hall, how many of you think that will be a disaster. Yes it will be a disaster. What if all of us cannot hear? It doesn't work and I just can't imagine it and I am color blind and I didn't know that I was missing certain colours in my life until I was tested when I was 12 years old. One day I came out of my house wearing a pink shirt, green pants and brown shoes because they all look brown to me and I came out and my mom looked at me and was like, no way and I thank God my mom is an artist, she does beautiful art works and I ask her, what's wrong all brown. She said, what brown that is pink, green and brown. I am like, no. Imagine if I went on Sunday to preach like that? I really thank God that God gives different gifts. I am the ears in the home, the music guy, my mom is the eyes in the home that sees the colours, my brother is the mouth in the home that talks a lot. We all are different, and it makes my family special because we have and we complement each other really well.

So the day when we started ministry all of us ended up in full-time ministry and served together in the same church. It was a beautiful thing and I really enjoyed those days serving together before I went to Singapore. All of us serve in different churches today but what I am just trying to say in the end is, we are so diverse, we are made different. I really don't want you to look like me, even if there are identical twins, they are not really identical also. There is something different about each one. The problem was in the Corinth church this diversity was gone upon. You can see that very clearly when they were partaking communion. There were people that were poorer, some of them were richer and what happened to the people that were poorer, they sat outside. Not only they sat outside, they eat the scraps and this is a bad thing because what happen is that individualism becomes the main thing and I think this is one of the problems with our society today. Individualism is the big deal.

I think individuality is celebrated. Being an individual is good but individualism seeing that I don't need others is not good. Now let's bring it practically into our context. How does that happen? As a pastor, I don't know how many times I have been, I can feel it like in the eyes and the way people comment at us, "you think you can do a better job than me". A lot of people think that, I don't know how many times this happened before everywhere I go, somebody got something to say about our leaders, even in our government some of us comment so well until we think we can do a better job. I think that is a mark of individualism. Individualism thinks that you don't need that person to do the job, you can do better.

Growing up sometimes I thought I could do a better job than my father. Especially, when my dad is with his computer, and that's the thing. I was about to go back to Singapore to serve again before this FBC thing happened and then I was talking to my mom and then my mom said, I think it is God's will that you stay because now you are my IT support. But the day I say to my mom, look go and get your own IT support, I really don't want to bother with this is the day individualism start. The worst part of it if you read later they were saying not just that I don't need you, they literally say you are dispensable. Individuality is a good thing and it doesn't matter whether you say, I am not good enough, but you are still part of this body. Everyone is part of this body and no one can say, any of you are not. Because it say, it is not for any reason that you are not part of the body unless you choose to cloth yourself with individualism.



*18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

If you go to different churches, they will give like catch phrases, anecdotes about who they are, they say we are a family church, we are a discipleship church, we are a mentoring church, we are a biblical centered church, a gospel centered church. Whatever it is we give all kinds of things, but do you notice that we need all these things to become church. You can't just be biblically centered, you have to be mission centered, you have to be gospel centered, you have to be apostolic, you have to be prophetic, you have to be spirit led, you have to have all the things to be church and God places the church where he wants it to be. He gives the church exactly what it needs to be and that's the problem today.

Many people say that our church is in lack of this or that, but I strongly believe that the church of God is never in lack. It says, God placed all the parts of the body, everyone of them just as he wanted them to be. Every church, every person, you are here because God placed you here and so those that we welcome you here today, we hope you stay because this is the body we want you to feel part of. We want you to feel welcome.

One body many parts, God arranges the members of the body. This is one of the toughest things for me to swallow growing up. Because sometimes I feel I can do better than certain leaders. Since I was young, I really know God gifted me with a lot of talent. He gave me so much and because of that when I was growing up, I was like, why did God put this person as my superior when he doesn't even know as much as I do, and it was frustrating. Because I would be disciplined, I would be scolded and I would be told that what I do is wrong and I know it is absolutely right and it was really tough growing up that way and I said, God how can you choose this person to be a leader, he doesn't even have talent and that happens a lot.

God places people and I was just thinking, all those times when I had to learn to submit, I learned a lot and in fact he doesn't even make me submit to just nice good people, or at least people with good hearts and all those kind of things, some people are really nasty. We always say why did God place leaders like that. That is what we all want to think, but God says he places leaders where they need to be, talents where they need to be, gifts where they need to be and you are indispensable. In Acts 10:34 says, God is respected of no man. It doesn't mean that God does not respect you. It is the way they use the language. It really means that God does not say, today you look good I will give you more gifts. God is not like that. God knows what the body needs to become complimentary, to become exactly it is. It is of no use to him if we are all just one. Uniformity is useless to God. Diversity is what he needs. He creates diversity, it is all his arrangement.

*19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 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!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable*

There are people that are indispensable and guess what it is not me, it is not you, it is the ones that are weak. We are not meant to be the same. We are created to be diverse. A body MUST

be made of many parts. We are meant to be united and there is only one body but the most important part, we cannot despise any person in Christian Community. I didn't realize as I was growing up, this attitude of I don't need you. This attitude started to spur in me an attitude that say that I really don't need anyone in my life, I just need me and that is an attitude that does not reflect the trinity at all. The trinity will never say, I don't need Jesus Christ. God will never say that. The Father will never say, look Jesus take the backseat, I don't need you. But what happened in the church today is we do live as if we don't need certain people, especially those that are weaker. The less honorable and weak are indispensable according to the Bible.

I believe that every part of the body should be honored, so we worship together, so the youth are there, the children are there and they are a bit noisy but we got use to it and the children are always there and I really enjoyed worshipping with my son. When I came to FBC it is difficult to worship with my son. In churches people don't like children crying and they make cry rooms for them. Children listen to each and every word that is spoken from our mouth. I never believe that they are dispensable. We segregate the children, the youth and the adult. I think that was the worst decision. We should disciple different because of our cognitive learning abilities but we should worship together. We treat them as less honorable. We treat them as weak and that is what was happening in the community of the Corinthians. They were segregating because you are poor you eat outside. We are doing the same thing by saying children don't need to worship with us or you are too annoyed to deal with the noise or the problem. Guess what we can make it easier and more welcoming by saying you are welcome to bring your kids here. Do we say that?

How about other things? How many churches do you know today actually have places for the disabled, the deaf, the blind? Are we ready to cater our worship with them? No we are not. In fact, we think never mind, you go and find another way and worship yourself. They are dispensable. This is the problem; we can never claim to be united if we do not value each other the way God values us. The parts we think are less honorable we treat with special honor and the parts that are unrepresentable we treat with special modesty, while our present parts need no special treatment, but God has put the body together, it is God not us that gives greater honor to the parts that lack it, so that there would be no division in body but that it's part should have equal concern.

So if you want to say, you have equal concern for everyone people that lack honor, people that are weaker deserves more honor, more attention and more of your money. A lot of handicapped people feel so disconnected in our societies because they just can't have access and that should never be the case. We should never segregate ourselves. In fact, it says, if you don't put more attention means you are not equally concerned. It is not, Oh I am concerned about you, I really feel something about you, that's enough. No, you don't put special concern for people who are weak and less honorable, means you are not equally concerned to each other. Now that is something that struck me very hard. I never saw that until now. That means if I don't give special honor to these people, actually I am not concerned about them at all, not the way God needs it to be, not the way God wants it to be. Anyway I put this story because I remember we were talking about the issue of homosexuality and there was this researcher that was going and talk at TedEx and he was saying, the opposite of addiction is not being sober, it is human connection.

We need to give special honor to addicts and people who are struggling, not by giving them money alone but we need to give them human connection. The issue with today's church is that we are so comfortable to say, I help you, I give you money but don't take my time, don't take my energy, please understand I have got so much more to bother about than you.

In Christian community if we honor and respect those who are weak and without honor then we can say we are equally concerned and guess what, God is the one that says, I will give greater honor to such people.

*<sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues<sup>[d]</sup>? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.*

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

We are united in everything (pain, honor and joy...). We have been learning about empathy. We have been learning about that kind of things. The word sympathy is not just like I pity you, it means what you feel is what I feel. In the movie when the actor cry, you also feel the same tightness in your throat, shortness of breath, we are made and designed by God to be able to feel exactly what the other person feels and yet we are so disconnected. We like this kind of sympathy as a church. When we look at the problems, when we read the newspaper it is horrible, what is happening but as a church we are supposed to be able to share. Another thing that happens when we share each other's joy and pain, you realize this, the burden becomes less. If your husband actually cries with you, you feel better. We need to cry with each other. We need to bear each other's pain.

Our joys we like to share with each other and that's the problem. The Corinthian church like to enjoy the food together, share that but among the rich people, but those who were indispensable and the ones that were in pain, those were the people that were widows. We don't spend time having place for people who have problems, to cry out to God any way they need, anyway they want. We don't share our laments; we just want to share our joys. We only want to see the good side of the pastor, but not the hard part. We don't just celebrate what is good, we need to celebrate and hopefully in services to come we can incorporate laments. In God's side indispensable are honored. So people who have felt left out in this congregation we want to honor you, we are here every week to pray for you not because we want to say and embarrass you, we want to give you the honor that God wants to give you. Every week and every day we are here for you to pray with you.

The disciples said that don't let children bother Jesus, but Jesus said, no. These people deserve the kingdom.

I want you to look at the harmony. When there is harmony to Christ it becomes the masterpiece for God. Harmony is produced when there is unity and diversity through love.

Music playing...

We are all part of what I call the gospel orchestra, the father is the producer, the one that one restores the gifts. He calls and he gives, he invites all these instruments, all these people, everybody personally. Son as the conductor, giving all the cues, everybody is following his direction. Holy Spirit is kind of like the arranger and the director, the one that is ghost behind the scene and write all the scores. We are the musicians that tell the story. Some are soloist, some may be like the singer, some might be like the instrument list, some may be the principle musicians among the violinist that's a principle musician which is the lead musician and there are some maybe technicians doing the sound, the video, all those kind of things to tell this story and you see it, but all are involved in one orchestra and I have experiences with orchestra, not so much playing, but my friend works in the NPO and he is basically the person that fixes all the instruments for the orchestra.

Are we one orchestra, is the gospel harmony through love that we are supposed to demonstrate and if we are not united you can talk about being gospel centered, it is useless if you don't harmonize each other. If we don't say to each other I need you and what I am trying to say as a pastor here, is many of you are thinking, aah you are not needed here, aah I am not important, guess what all of you are needed in this place, in this church, in this story that God has crafted because he saved each and every one of you and guess what, you may not be the soloist, you may not. The Bible says, not all are called to be apostles, not all are called to be teachers but guess what we are all in this orchestra together.