

DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

ONE ANOTHERING

Torchworld Ministries

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Teaching Tuesday

Last week we looked at our relationship with the Body of Christ. Today we are going to look at practical ways we are supposed to relate to other believers. I call it one anothering.

Just as the book of Leviticus expounded the Old Testament laws, so do the epistles expand the New Testament law of love. Jesus gave us a new commandment.

John13:34: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (NKJV)

The emphasis of the new commandment is AS I HAVE LOVED YOU' which is higher in standard and more powerful than the Old Testament law whose emphasis was AS YOURSELF. The kind of love Jesus introduced was the one another love. He didn't go into much details about how to carry out this command. But the Holy Spirit through the apostles in the epistles showed us how to live it out practically. Remember the epistles were written to the church. All the other books were written for us not to us.

Let us know that we are different members of the same body. Whatever we do, we do for the entire body. You may be wondering how you can love the universal body of Christ. You may not have the opportunity to do that. But there is a way you can touch the entire body of Christ spiritually. That is by loving those in the little group you fellowship with. The local church is a representation of the universal body of Christ. As you start learning how to love the members of your local church sincerely, it will grow to transcend boundaries. Before long, you will be loving other children of God sincerely. These are some of the practical ways we can love one another as found in the epistles.

A. COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

HELP OR KINDNESS TO SOMEBODY WHO IS SUFFERING. GIVING STRENGTH AND HOPE;
EASING THE GRIEF OR PAIN: HURTING WITH.

1 Thessalonians4:18: Therefore COMFORT ONE ANOTHER with these words. (NKJV)

The Bible enjoins us to comfort one another with the same comfort that, God comforts us. (2 Corinthians1:1-4)

Comfort is very important. Medical treatment can bring healing to a physical injury but emotional hurt from abuse, death of a loved one, business failure, broken relationship needs another kind of treatment. And that is comfort. Comfort is usually done with words of hope and encouragement. The bible says

Romans 12:15: Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. (NKJV)

That is comfort. Sharing with other's pain and discouragement. Trying to ease their pain by being there. When a member of our spiritual family is hurt or suffers a misfortune, we should provide by sharing sympathy.

B. ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER

RECEIVE WILLINGLY, SAY YES TO, CONSIDER AS GOOD AND PROPER. TREAT AS WELCOME, TAKE AS TRUE.

Romans 15:7 - Therefore receive one another AS CHRIST ALSO RECEIVED US to the glory of God. (NKJV)

One of the ways to show our love for our brethren is to accept them irrespective of their spiritual status. Christ accepted us and we have been accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:7). We shouldn't look down on our brethren because of their background, tribe, race, colour or immaturity. We should accept all as good and proper.

Romans 14:1 - Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. (NKJV)

We should be able to tolerate other people. All of us are not at the same level of our Christian life. We are all not the same. Some are loud, others are quiet. Some are polished, others are unpolished. Some are spiritual, others are carnal. Nevertheless, we should be able to accept each one of them.

1 Corinthians 12:20 - But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. (NKJV)

We should know that we are not the whole body. There is a gift in each part of the body to bless the whole body. We need to respect and recognize other people's gifts and give them space to develop and be a blessing to the entire body. We should believe in one another's ministry because after all, no one does anything. It is God who gives the increase.

One problem with the church these days is vainglory and competitive jealousy. People cannot tolerate other gifts growing under them. We are so full of ourselves that we always take delight in comparing ourselves with ourselves. There should be no room for jealousy in the body. Know your gift and stay in it. After all, without others, your own gift would be useless. Have you ever seen a mango tree eating its own fruit before? We should accept one another. The whole body should accept that the eye is good at seeing. So then let us encourage the eye to see and see well. Let not the ear bother himself with seeing. Let not the neck envy the hand because the hand can move to any part of the body. That is his ministry. God has set the parts of the body as it has pleased him.

Therefore, 1 Peter 4:10 says, as each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (NKJV)

Let us accept one another's ministry. Concentrate on what He has called you to do. God is going to judge you by how you allowed your own unique gift to minister to people not how you tried to become like somebody. A star differs from a star in glory. We shouldn't belittle anybody's gift no matter how small it is. This is an attitude we need to abolish from the family. People tend to raise one gift above all the others. That is wrong.

No one part of the body is more important than the others. In the sight of God, we are all equal. God doesn't have any favourites. Each will receive his reward from God according to how he worked.

1 Corinthians 12:26 - And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice. (NKJV)

This is why we should not be envious of one another. If one part does well, it affects the entire body. When the hand writes well, the whole body receives praise. In the same way, when one part does something shameful, all the body receives shame. That is why we must also exhort one another.

C. PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER UNTO GOOD WORKS

TO SPUR ON, ENCOURAGE TO DO GOOD, TO STIMULATE ONE TO BE ACTIVE

Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. (NKJV)

We have been called unto good works.

Ephesians2:10 - For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (NKJV)

That is our calling. Jesus went about doing good (Acts10:35) and he has commanded us to be fruitful unto every good work. We should spur one another on to do good works. Sometimes we tend to relax and forget about our responsibilities and that is why we should always provoke one another unto good works.

D) SHOW AFFECTION TO ONE ANOTHER

SHOWING FONDNESS, CARE AND CLOSENESS THROUGH TOUCH OR WORDS

Romans12:10 - Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. (NKJV)

Showing affection means using appropriate physical touch or words to tell people how much they are loved. In keeping with the culture both Peter and Paul admonished the brethren to greet one another with a holy kiss. (Romans16:16,1Peter5:4). In those days it was customary for people to exchange pleasantries by embracing themselves and giving themselves slight pecks on the cheeks. There are many ways of expressing affection to other saints. To some it may be a hug. To others it may be a special card on a special occasion. In any case show affection. We are to be deeply affectionate with one another.

3 John 14 - But I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. GREET THE FRIENDS BY NAME. (NKJV)

This is also a nice way of showing affection. In the local church family, I belong to, it is our custom to call all those celebrating their birthdays every week and pray for them. It is a way of letting them know that they are loved.

E. CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

TAKING THOUGHT OF ONE ANOTHER, TO BE INTERESTED IN AND ENTERING INTO ANOTHER'S WORLD

1 Corinthians12:25 - That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. (NKJV)

It is often said that 'people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care'. As different members of one body, we should convey appropriate interest and concern towards one another. When a member of our physical body suffers, we quickly attend to it. We should show the same concern for one another.

2 Corinthians 8:1-2 - Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

Looking at the way the Macedonian brethren behaved, I think there is more room for improvement for Christians of today. When our fellow saints are in trouble, our hearts should be stirred up to rise up and respond generously to their need. That is caring.

F. FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

REFRAINING FROM PUNISHING ONE AS A RESULT OF OFFENCE, TO STOP BEING BITTER, NOT HOLDING ONE'S OFFENCE AGAINST HIM.

Ephesians 4:32 - And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you (NKJV)

In the above text, the present continuous tense is used 'forgiving one another'. This means it is something that is done continuously. What it actually refers to is that we should be making allowances for one another's offences. Note also that it says we should forgive as Christ forgave us. He brings the New Testament standard into being. Both Christ and Stephen forgave their killers. How much more should we forgive our own brethren? The only parable in the entire bible which Jesus explained immediately he gave it was the parable of the unforgiving servant. (Matthew 18:21-35)

This is because God takes it personally. Our inability to forgive will seriously hinder our prayers.

Colossians 3:13 - Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do (NKJV)

Note, 'even as Christ forgave you'. How did Christ forgive us? Christ forgave us the moment we sinned. But he came to die to reconcile us back to himself. Forgiveness is an attitude. It is a matter of heart decision. We should make allowance for people's faults. If you want to study more on forgiveness, please see my book, 'Forgiveness: what, why, who, when and how'.

G. TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER

This means to warn, instruct and cause one another to understand. (Colossians 3:16, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 10:25)

H. PREFER ONE ANOTHER

To regard others. To set them in high estimation (Romans 12:10)

I. PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

To supplicate, intercede and petition for others. (James 5:16)

J. SUBMIT TO ONE ANOTHER (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)

K. DO NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER

To draw unfair and unjust conclusions on others' lives. To criticize them unfairly and condemn them. (Romans 14:13)

The above is not an exhaustive list. I enjoin you to do further studies in the bible with the help of the Holy Spirit and you will come to a deeper understanding of these things. The new testament love is the one another love. Loving God always ends up in loving our brethren.