

Is this not what everybody really wants to find? A place to fit in? A place to contribute? A place to feel appreciated for what one has to offer? The Lord knew that the people He created would have a need like this, so He established the church. The church is a place where people can coordinate their talents and efforts to accomplish the work of God. To illustrate this quality of the church, the apostle Paul employed another descriptive analogy. He compared the church to “A Human Body.” In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul said that God put all things in subjection under the feet of Christ, “and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” There it is ... the church is called the body of Christ. The “Body” analogy emphasizes the type of coordination which should exist between all parties involved with the church.

For instance, there must be a certain kind of coordination between the body and the head. Paul often stressed the point that Christ is the head of the church, which is His body (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23). In a human being, the members of the body must obey the signals which are sent out by the head and be submissive to them. Likewise, in the body of Christ (the church), all members must also be submissive to the head, which is Christ. In Ephesians 5:23-24, Paul concluded that since Christ is head of the church, then “the church is subject to Christ.” Here is yet another way to illustrate the authority that belongs to Christ. He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). This point has strong doctrinal consequences for the Lord’s church. It demands that the things we teach and practice must be true to the instructions coming from the head. Otherwise, the head has lost control of the body and the body will destroy itself through uncontrolled, spastic behavior. John expressed it this way, “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son” (II John 9). Certainly, the advice of Paul in Colossians 3:17 would apply both to individual members of the body as well as to the entire church as a whole, “whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” In other words, do everything by His authority.

So, this is one way the human body helps us understand the church -- the body must be in subjection to the head. Another lesson we can learn is how each member of the church should coordinate with every other member of the church. Paul explained it very well in I Corinthians 12:12-27. He said that every single member of the Lord’s body is important. Even though there is only one body, there are many members in it, just like a human body. To stress the point that no one member is any more important than another, Paul painted a scenario in which the foot and the hand were jealous of each other; and so were the eye and the ear. Then he made his point: What if the whole body were an eye - how could it hear? What if the whole body were an ear - where would be the sense of smell? Paul said, “God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” You see, we need each other and we must avoid jealousy and division in the church. Christians must care for each other and suffer with each other and really appreciate each other in the body. In Romans 12:4-8, Paul listed a variety of “functions” which different Christians can contribute and urged his readers to use the “gift” that God has given each individual person. Some serve, some teach, some encourage, some give, some lead. If everyone uses his own gift and is thankful for the gifts of others, no jealousy and division will overtake the Lord’s church; and the spirit of coordination that God intended will thrive.

Undoubtedly, there are great benefits to being in the body of Christ. The peace of Christ is said to be in the body (Colossians 3:15); and reconciliation to God is said to be in the body (Ephesians 2:16). But without a doubt, the greatest benefit is the salvation which is found only in the body of Christ. Paul said that Christ is “the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:23). Who will Jesus save when He comes again? It will be “the body” -- it will be “His church.”

Jesus is the head of only one body; He is the head of only one church. Paul said, “There is one body” (Ephesians 4:4). “How do I become a part of the body of Christ?”, you might ask. It is the same story told throughout the New Testament. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one

body” (I Corinthians 12:13). The same process which places one in “the church” also places one in “the body”. And no wonder, for “the church” **IS** “His body” (Ephesians 1:22-23).



**Bible Probe**

**THE CHURCH: A PLACE TO FIT IN**

1. In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul said that Christ is “\_\_\_\_\_ over all things to the \_\_\_\_\_ which is His \_\_\_\_\_.”

2. By using the analogy of a human body, God demonstrated the kind of \_\_\_\_\_ which should exist in the church.

3. What part does Jesus play in the Body Analogy? (Colossians 1:18)

How, then, must the body (the church) respond to Him? (Eph 5:23-24)

What happens if the body is not submissive to the head?

What practical applications of this principle are expressed in the following scriptures?

II John 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Col 3:17 \_\_\_\_\_

4. In I Cor 12:12-27, how does Paul explain the harmony God expects from body members?

How should members of the body feel about each other and treat each other?

5. From Romans 12:4-8, list some of the “functions” that various body members have to offer to the over-all work of the church.

What attitude should body members have toward the “gifts” of other members?

6. Beside each of the following scriptures, list a “benefit” of being in the body of Christ.

Colossians 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:23 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many “bodies” does Christ have? (Eph 4:4)                      How many churches?

What must one do to become a part of the “Body of Christ”? (I Cor 12:13)