

Home Group study: week beginning 4th July 2021

Better Together — Interconnection and unity through diversity

Can you think of a process you've been through recently where different people, or groups of people, have had to work together to make something happen? (It may be some building work, organising a party, an emergency situation for example: or something completely different!) How well did it work out? Did everyone pull together to make it work well or was it a complete disaster? Why was this?

Read: Acts 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Understanding

What (*or, rather, whom*) does Paul suggest it is that makes the church 'one body'?

Is the church really 'one body' or are we a collection of individuals?

Why do you think it is important that the church should work as one body?

In verses 15-17 Paul singles out different parts of the body. Is there a suggestion that some parts of the body are more important than others? Are some components of the Body of Christ, the Church, more important than others?

Here Paul suggests some parts of the body may feel they don't belong; later on he suggests some parts of the body may feel they can manage without other parts. What does that suggest about the way we may feel about our own individual place in the church? Why might he have talked about the parts that feel they don't belong before the other parts?

Paul has suggested that no part of the body can manage without the rest. But then in verses 28-31 he seems to suggest there is actually a hierarchy. Do verses 28-31 contradict the earlier parts of the passage? What is Paul trying to tell us in these verses?

Application

Chris summed up the passage as saying:

- 'Diversity leads to unity when the members use God-given gifts to serve each other; but diversity leads to disunity when members compete with one another.'

Would you agree? How can we use our gifts to ensure unity: and how might the way we use (or perhaps *misuse* our gifts) create disunity?

How important is it for members of the church to come back to in-person church

- a) to ensure the church grows and develops well and
- b) to ensure unity?

Chris quoted words attributed to US President John Adams: '**every problem is an opportunity in disguise**'. The church, like the rest of society, has been dealing with the problem of COVID. Has that problem given us opportunities?

What now are the opportunities facing Jubilee Church as we emerge from the worst effects of the pandemic?

There are important lessons to be learned from the passage we've been looking at. What are those lessons and how can we apply them to ourselves individually to ensure that the church makes the most of the opportunities now facing us? Are there ways each of us can ensure that the church functions to the best of its ability as it comes back together?

Chris suggested we need about 30 serving people to run a service. What are the roles that are needed to make our services function? Is one role more (or less) important than any of the others? Are some of those roles a chore? If so, what are the benefits of doing them, both to each of us as individuals and to the body as a whole?

Apparently it was a first-century Jewish scholar called Hillel (*don't you just love Wikipedia...?*) who coined the phrase 'If not you, then who? If not now, when?' Ask yourselves those questions.

PRAY:

- That by the Holy Spirit we would function properly as one body;
- That we all come to recognise and exercise our gift;
- That we should not envy other people's gifts but be content to serve as God wants us to.