

Connecting to Grow Together Week 4

Key verse : 1 Corinthians 12.27

You (plural) are the body
Each (singular) is a part

Does anyone know offhand how many parts there are to a human body?
Name as many as you can.

All work together in harmony – unless one is broken, diseased, or refuses to work.

How does this illustrate the Body of Christ of which each of you is a part?
Do we all work as God designed us to do? If not, why not?

Christ's body is not a physical body, we are connected spiritually.

1 Corinthians 12.12.

How many of you have connections by email, texts, facebook etc.... every day?
Millions of people connect to others by these and many other means.

How do we connect spiritually?

1.Connected by Example

Philippians 3.17

1 Corinthians 4.16 How was Paul able to tell the Corinthians to imitate him?

Ephesians 5.1, 1 Thessalonians 1.6.

Philippians 3.17

Paul followed Christ so closely that others could be challenged to do the same.
He would move into a city, live among the people for some time, teach them, and communicate to them what Jesus did and said, by what he did and said.

Nature shows us that even birds and animals can learn by example. Children learn more by example often than by what they are told.
Genesis 18.19 – How was Abraham to teach his children and household?

Notice the connection between teaching and doing.

We can all learn from the example of others. Some examples are good, some are not. What is the best example someone has shown you by their lives?

Stradivarius the maker of violins and cellos, felt the resonance of each piece of wood he used, and taught those who wanted to learn from him to do the same. But no one has quite managed his skill. All of us have some skill we have learned over the years – how can we pass that on?

2.Connected by teaching

Colossians 3.16

Does this refer only to those with the gift of teaching?

Romans 15.14

All of us have experiences of Christ and his word that we can share. We all need to be immersed in the word, to know it, to spend time reading and meditating on it and putting it into practice.

Colossians 3.16 tells us to **admonish** one another – What does ‘admonish’ mean?

A dictionary explanation: Exhort, warn, remind someone of a danger, fault, duty fact. To reprove. This admonishment is to be done in wisdom – wisdom that is based on God’s word, not our opinion. We can only admonish others if we ourselves apply God’s word in every aspect of our lives. How easy is this?

So no matter what our particular gifting might be, we can all use it for teaching others – and always example is the best teacher.

3.Connected by serving

Galatians 5.13

As we see needs, we should act, not wait for someone else to act.

a.Understand the call. We are all called to serve God and each other
We can’t wait until we feel like serving, or we may never do it.

b.Regularly say no to self interests and yes to service.
What captivates us? Sport? Business? Travel? Possessions? These and many other things can cause us to focus on self and miss opportunities to serve.

c.Be motivated by love.
We have God’s love in us – Romans 5.5. Love is service, we are saved to serve.
Jesus didn’t wait for others to serve. Matthew 29.27-28
We are to do as he did, John 13.12-16.
To serve Jesus isn’t a punishment, it is a privilege, and has its reward. John 12.26

4.Connected by forgiveness

Bitterness and unforgiveness are cancers that eat from the inside and destroy.

Ephesians 4.32

When we forgive and let go, we are free to live for God and others.

Fellowship without forgiveness is impossible.

Mark 11.25, Luke 6.37 - a challenge to the unforgiving.

- a. Talk to God first, it clears the way
- b. Talk to the person
- c. Confess our fault – often the need for forgiveness can be two way

Learn to forgive and to be forgiven.

Any examples of the pain of unforgiveness? Maybe someone you should have forgiven, or someone who has never forgiven you. How has unforgiveness affected you?