

The Saints at Philippi

Introduction

As I was preparing for a book study of Philippians, I felt led to stop in verse one and do a series on Leadership. I saw team ministry, servant leadership, apostolic ministry, discipleship, overseers, and deacons. We did not do all these topics, but we have spent nine weeks on leadership. I am firmly convinced from my experience in ministry that healthy and growing churches are always developing leaders. They are committed to the growth and development of their members.

(Philippians 1:1) "Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:"

Last week, I tackled a slightly more difficult subject, women in leadership. It is clear that many women were very involved in ministry in the New Testament. Women held offices in the churches. There were probably some women on the leadership team at Philippi. We saw that there were four hurdles that women have to go over to run their race. For women called to leadership, and for all women, we want to help them run their race in a way that they might win. We all benefit when every joint supplies, particularly in the area of ministry that he or she has been called to do.

This week I want to turn our attention to the saints at Philippi, the members of the church in Philippi. We have been saying all along that healthy churches are committed to the growth and development of their members. Not all are called to be overseers. Learning about the overseers helps all of us because their calling, life, and ministries are models for all of us to follow. Not all of us are called to the office of servant (deacon), but learning about servants is helpful to all of us, because we are all called to serve in the body.

This morning I want to discuss the saints at Philippi, or for that matter, the members of any other church. In particular I want to look at local church membership. These are not just saints that Paul is addressing; they are the saints at Philippi. They are identified as the saints in Philippi. Why are they identified as the saints who are in Philippi? What is the application for us? Why do we have membership and why do we identify ourselves as the saints are that belong to the East Mountain Vineyard? Why is membership important and is there a Scriptural basis for membership? **This morning, I want to address this question about why we have a membership.**

When I was growing up, I was made to go to church. When I was turned off by Christianity at about 11 or 12, I became an atheist. My parents told me that I was a Christian and that I had been baptized as a baby. I was also made to go through confirmation at the age of 13. I told them that they could make me go to church, but they could not make me a Christian. I saw a disconnect between the message of the gospel and the lifestyle message of the people in the church. I wanted nothing to do with it. My heart became very hardened.

During my freshmen year at TCU, a man from Southwestern Seminary came by periodically and shared with me. I saw something different in his life. There was a genuineness, and there was love. I could see the love of Christ in his eyes. He was not pushy; he gave me the space and time that I needed. God was softening my heart and drawing me to Himself. I received Christ just before my Sophomore year at a golf tournament in Duncan, Oklahoma. I got on my knees as the Chisholm Trail Motel and asked Christ to come into my life. My life was changed and I am no longer the same person. Thank You Lord for my salvation and for giving me an abundant life.

The Saints at Philippi

After I did become a Christian and began witnessing to people, many of them said that they were members of their church and were saved. I began to have a dislike for church membership. I saw so many people who were hiding behind their membership. These people had never placed their faith in Christ. These people did not believe in Christ. These people had not received Christ or confessed Him as Lord. Most had been sprinkled as babies, and some were later confirmed as a young teen. They were church members, but were not believers. I developed a bad attitude towards church membership and did not believe in it.

I was a young, immature, and foolish believer. I knew nothing about the reasons for membership. As I grew and matured in my walk, I came to understand what membership is all about. Now, I have some very strong convictions about membership. These convictions are based on a number of different principles. This morning I want to talk about church membership. I have given it an Acronym called FARM. The F is for Family; the A is for allotment; R is for responsibility; and the M is for ministry.

F – Family

A – Allotment

R – Responsibility

M – Ministry

1. Family

A. Family Identity. Families implies many things. I want to take a few minutes to discuss what being a household means. The first thing that family implies is identity.

Paul addresses this letter to the saints at Philippi or the members of the church at Philippi. In some cities, there were more than one church. For example, Paul writes to the beloved of God in Rome, called as saints. There are five churches identified in this letter in Rome. We find these churches identified in Romans 16 by their leadership.

(Romans 1:1, 7) "Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God... {7} to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

(Romans 16:3-15) "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, {4} who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; {5} also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. {6} Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. {7} Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. {8} Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. {9} Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. {10} Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. {11} Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord. {12} Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord. {13} Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine. {14} Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them. {15} Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them."

The Saints at Philippi

He calls them households. Prisca and Aquila had a church in their house. Notice that she was listed first. Notice that there is the household or church of Aristobulus. In verse 11, Paul greets those who are of the household of Narcissus. Notice in verse fourteen that Paul greets a team of people: Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, and Hermas. These would be the overseers of that particular church. Notice that he not only greets them, but the brethren with them. In verse 15, Paul greets Philogus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, and all the saints that are with them. Again, these are the overseers of that particular church in Rome. They are all identified by the pastor, or pastoral team. They all have saints who are with them. There were people who are clearly identified with the leaders of their churches.

In this letter, I do not believe Paul is addressing members of different churches in Philippi. At this point in time, I do not believe that Philippi had a number of different churches. Paul writes to the overseers, deacons and saints at Philippi. This could be to all the overseers of different churches and all the saints at the various churches in Philippi, but I do not think that is the case. Paul writes a very personal letter to the Philippians. If he were writing to all the churches in Philippi, I do not think he would be telling all of them to help Euodia and Syntyche to get along and live in harmony. I think that these are two ladies in one church and he wants the members of that church to help them. This is one church, not a group of churches. The saints at Philippi are the members of the one church in Philippi.

When we look at Romans 16, they were called the household of Aristobulus, or the household of Narcissus. When we look at the qualifications for an elder, one of the qualifications is that he must be a good manager of his household. If he cannot manage his own house, how is he going to manage the church of God.

(1 Timothy 3:5) "(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?);"

A few verses later, Paul tells why he wrote the letter to Timothy. He wants us to know how we are to conduct ourselves in the household of God, which is the church of the living God. Notice that Paul specifically links the household of God and the church. A household is a family unit. In Rome, there were five households identified. Each one of them were identified by the pastors of that church.

(1 Timothy 3:15) "but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

Today, we typically do not know churches as households, and we usually do not identify them by their leaders. We call many churches 1st Baptist of Rome, 1st United Methodist of Rome, and the Vineyard of Rome. Some churches are actually trying to break free of stigmatism attached to certain denominations and are repackaging or re-labeling their product. We have Saddlebacks, Copperpoints, Northpoints, Southpoints, Legacies, and Sagebrushes. Many of them have the same product, but with different labels. Churches are trying to create their own unique identity.

There are some today who feel that there should not be any identifying marks on churches. We are all the church of God. That is true, but it is also true that there are millions of local churches that make up that universal church. These individual churches have different leadership teams, different

The Saints at Philippi

personalities, different strengths and weaknesses, and different identifications. All believers are part of the universal church, but they are also part of a local household or church.

Karen and I have ten natural children. Each of our children took on the last name of Murchison when they were born. They were part of the household of the Murchisons. Three of my daughters took on a new last name when they changed households, i.e. they got married. In 1999, Karen and I adopted a little girl. We gave her the name, Magan Grace Murchison. Magan means delivered. This little girl was delivered by grace. She took on our name because she was legally adopted into our family. There was an adoption process where she became part of the family. Families have their own unique identity. They have a common name and identity.

B. Loving Family Relationships One very important aspects of a family is the loving relationships.

Many people have not grown up in a loving home, and that is unfortunate. God's intent is for the family to be a place of loving relationships. A husband is to love and cherish his wife. He is called to love his wife just as Christ loved the church. A wife is called to love and honor her husband. Older women are called to teach the younger women how to love their husbands. Children are to honor their mothers and fathers. We are called brothers and sisters. Again, those are terms of unique relationships in a family. They are related to one another and have a special bond to one another. The way that the family members treat one another is how people in the church are called to treat one another. That is essentially what Paul is telling Timothy in his first epistle to him. That is how we are to conduct ourselves in the household of God.

When someone joins the East Mountain Vineyard, they are joining a family. They are joining a household. Just as little Magan Grace took on our identity, people take on the identity of East Mountain Vineyard. There is nothing wrong with that. As long as we act like a family is supposed to act, that is a good thing. We want to become known as a church that is full of love for God, full of love for one another, and who reaches out in love to those who are not yet part of the family. There was a process for Magan to become a member of our family. It was called adoption. You can be born into a family, like our natural children, or be adopted into the family.

My desire is for us to reach out into the community and share the love of Jesus with people. (See Galatians 6:10.) We want to see lots of people born into the East Mountain Vineyard family. At the same time, there are many other people that do not have a church family, and need to be in a family. We want to adopt and receive these people into our church family. We want them to find a safe, loving, home where they can be healed, and become healthy family members. We want them to be able to develop trust in people and leadership. We want them to find support and care. All of this is part of being in the family.

We are in the process of developing an adoption process. Currently, we just have two requirements, that you go through the vision orientation, and that you complete a membership form. The membership form has several key components. Membership is for believers. There is a place for people to write their testimony of how they received Christ. One of the first acts of obedience for believers is baptism. There is a place to indicate if you have been baptized. Then, there is a place for people to indicate their gifts, and abilities. There is also a place to express the passion or desired place of service. There are the personal things, like date of birth, anniversary, and children. A family needs to celebrate with you on these special occasions.

The Saints at Philippi

There is also a place for people to agree to support the family with their prayers, service, and giving. There is a place for people to indicate their agreement with the rules of the house, i.e. the church doctrines. The Vineyard is pretty conservative doctrinally.

C. Family Care Another important part of being in a family is the care that members have for one another.

My children are cared for by Karen and I. We have the responsibility of making sure they receive care. If they are sick, we care for them. If they are hurt, we care for them. They receive provision. They don't buy the groceries; Mom and Dad buy them. In the family of God, you receive spiritual provision. The leadership has a responsibility of feeding your souls. My children receive protection. In the family of God, there is spiritual protection and covering.

D. Family Training Another thing that takes place in a family is training.

We are called to train up our children in the way that they should go. In the church family, there is also training and equipping that should be taking place. I have a real heart for equipping and training the body. I want us to have lots of equipping workshops and seminars. At the same time, I do not want to wear everyone out. There is a balance.

(Proverbs 22:6) "Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it."

E. Family Chores Another part of being a family is doing chores. Everyone in our family has responsibilities.

We all rinse and wash dishes. We all put dishes away. We all vacuum and sweep. We take out trash, put away laundry, and a myriad of other chores. Part of being in a family is that everyone has responsibilities and chores. The church family is no different. When we join the East Mountain Vineyard, we need to begin to serve and do whatever needs to be done. All of us have a responsibility to make sure all the jobs get done.

F. Family Fun Another ingredient of families is having fun and playing together.

Not everything is serious. There must be times to laugh and have fun together. My older children remember the family vacations that we use to take. We tried to go to a different amusement park every year. We also did lots of camping, and these produced great memories. I have been reminded that I need to get my life more in balance and play more cards with Joanna. We need more fun nights as a family. The church also needs to have fun together. We need to have some fun nights as a church.

One of the most fun things that we did in a couple different churches was the fall festival. There was square dancing with a caller. There were cake walks, and lots of fun games and events. As a church, we need to plan some fun events. These can also be great outreaches to our neighbors, because they like to have fun also. It would be good for them to see that Christians can have fun and laugh together.

The Saints at Philippi

The saints in Philippi were part of a household. They had an identity. They had loving relationships. They were to serve one another and care for one another. They were also to have fun together. As a church, we need to always keep in mind that we are a church family. Becoming a member is joining the family at East Mountain Vineyard.

2. Allotment God allots people to a church.

In Philippi, if I am correct, all the saints were part of one church. Rome is another story; there were five churches mentioned in Romans 16. If you lived in Rome at that time, how would you know where to go to church? I believe that church is relationships. I believe that believers went to the church where they were relationally connected. Very often geographical location prohibits us from being connected strictly on current relationships. The Demgars still call this their church, even though they live in Goodyear, Arizona. They have connected with a Vineyard in Goodyear. They are forming new relationships in Goodyear.

In 1 Peter 5:2-3, we are given another bit of information about church membership. Peter charges the elders to shepherd the flock, and not to lord over those allotted to their charge. The membership in a church is an allotment from the Lord. An allotment is very specific and measurable. Let's take a look at what an allotment is.

(1 Peter 5:2-3) "shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; {3} nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

Notice in verse three that the elders are not to lord over those allotted to their charge. The New International Version says not to lord over those entrusted to your care. The King James Version says not to lord over God's heritage. I believe that the New American Standard probably has the most accurate rendering. The Greek word is *cleros*, which means a lot used for drawing lots, a portion, or a part, or a piece. When the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' garments, the word *cleros* is used for lots. In 1 Peter 5:3, there are parts of the universal church, or allotments, that are given to a local church for the leadership to shepherd. The word *clergy* comes from the Greek word that is used in this verse. The clergy (pastors/elders/overseers) were to take care of the *cleros* or allotment.

The word allotment is used a number of times in the Old Testament. In Numbers 18, the Lord gave the offerings to the priests as their allotment. The priests and Levites did not get an allotment of land. Instead, they received the tithes and offerings of the peoples. The use of tithes and offerings has not changed. They are still given to support the workers in the ministry.

In Joshua 13-15, He gave an allotted inheritance to each of the tribes. It was a permanent allotment whose boundaries were defined and measurable. Notice the allotment to Judah. It is well defined and very specific. It is a legal description, very similar to what you would find on a property deed.

(Joshua 15:1-2) "Now the lot for the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their families reached the border of Edom, southward to the wilderness of Zin at the extreme south. {2} And their south border was from the lower end of the Salt Sea, from the bay that turns to the south."

The Saints at Philippi

Within each of the tribal allotments, he gave land to the Lord. The land was to be used to set up a holy place for the sanctuary, and so that the priests and Levites had land to build their homes. In Ezekiel 45:1-4, we find that these allotments were 25,000 cubits by 10,000 cubits. A cubit is 18 inches, or half a yard. According to my calculations, the priests and Levites were given 12,913.2 acres of each inheritance or allotment.

(Ezekiel 45:1-4) ""And when you shall divide by lot the land for inheritance, you shall offer an allotment to the LORD, a holy portion of the land; the length shall be the length of 25,000 cubits, and the width shall be 10,000. It shall be holy within all its boundary round about. {2} "Out of this there shall be for the holy place a square round about five hundred by five hundred cubits, and fifty cubits for its open space round about. {3} "And from this area you shall measure a length of 25,000 cubits, and a width of 10,000 cubits; and in it shall be the sanctuary, the most holy place. {4} "It shall be the holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the LORD, and it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary."

All of these allotments were specific and defined. There was not a question as to who they belonged to. I believe the same concept carries over to the New Testament. There is a specific allotment of people given to leaders to take care of. The elders or shepherds or given the responsibility of leading, feeding, and caring for the flock that has been allotted to them.

God is the one who allots people to a church. When people come speak with me about our church, I pray for the Lord to make it clear to them if they are to be part of this body. I believe that God calls people to a body. I believe He has an allotment of people for the East Mountain Vineyard. The leadership has a responsibility to take care of this allotment from the Lord. Remember that an allotment or cleros is just a part. There are many allotments or parts in the body of Christ. A local church is just one part of the body of Christ – the universal church.

Why church membership? Because God puts an allotment of people in a church. It is His plan for the church and for the individual. It is not His plan for people to be out of fellowship and outside the church. It is His plan to allot people to different bodies. It is His way of making sure that people are shepherded and cared for, and in relationship with one another. It is part of His plan to accomplish His work and fulfill His purposes in an area.

3. Responsibility

When a person joins a church, there is one significant thing or exchange that occurs. The individual is placing himself under the care of the leaders, and the leaders are committing themselves to care for the person. Both parties become responsible and accountable to one another and to God. I want to spend a few minutes talking about these responsibilities. I will start with the responsibilities of leaders and then discuss the responsibility of members.

A. The Responsibility of Leaders

In Hebrews 13:17, church members are told to obey your leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give account. As a leader, I want to know several things about giving account to God.

The Saints at Philippi

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

- Who am I going to have to give account for? Am I responsible for visitors? Am I responsible for occasional attenders? What determines who I have to give account for?
- How can I give account for the souls of visitors? How do I know what is going on in their lives? How can I give account for the souls of people that come to service once a month? How can I give account for people that I am not in relationship with, and don't really know what is going on in their lives?
- For those who have placed themselves under my care, i.e. have become members, what are the specific things about their souls or their lives that I am going to have to give account for? How detailed is this giving account? What kind of structure or wineskin needs to be in place for me to be able to give proper account for lots of people?
- What does it mean to watch? What kind of watch do the leaders need to do so that they can give proper account?

In Acts 20:28-30, the Ephesian elders are admonished by Paul to guard the flock. They are to watch over the flock and protect them from false teachers and divisive people. Paul is giving the overseers of the church the same charge that Peter gives in 1 Peter 5:1-4.

(Acts 20:28-30) ""Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. {29} "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."

We are going to be talking about Life Groups in a few weeks. We want to lay a good foundation for Life Groups. I am firmly convinced that Life Groups are essential to help the leaders watch over the flock. I do not believe leaders can give account for those under their care without having the church membership broken down into smaller groups with Life Group Leaders or Shepherds caring for the members of that group. Additionally, the Life Group Shepherds need to have relationship with those over them. They need to be cared for, and they need to give account to those over them for what is going on in their groups. If the relationship is not there, the communication will not be there. If there is no communication, everyone is in trouble. We need relationships. We need good communication. We must have a way to watch over the flock and to give account to God.

Earlier, I mentioned that when we adopted someone into our family, there was a legal transaction and a handing over of the child. In the church family a similar transaction needs to take place. When a member places himself under the care of a church family, the leaders of the church need to accept responsibility for that care. The membership application is one-sided. It is all about the new member agreeing to this or that. The leadership must agree to take responsibility for the new member. This transaction needs involvement and commitment by both parties.

In addition to watching and giving account to God, the leaders of a church need to make a commitment to the members to watch over them and to care for them. Our process of receiving people into the family needs to incorporate this two-sided transaction.

The Saints at Philippi

B. The Responsibility of Members Just as a leader has responsibilities, members also have responsibilities. Some of these responsibilities are given to them in Hebrews 13:17. Before a member accepts these responsibilities and commits to becoming a member, I believe there are a number of important questions that need to be asked.

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

- Who are the leaders that I am being asked to submit to?
- Do I trust these leaders? What credibility do they have?
- What kind of reputation or character do they have?
- Who is watching over my soul and will have to give account for my soul?
- What are the things that I should or should not do to make this profitable for me?
- What are things that I can do that will make it joyful for my leaders to give account?
- What are things that I might do that would cause my leaders grief in their giving account?

You should be able to trust your leadership. It is very difficult to submit to people that you do not trust. It is very difficult to obey people that do not have integrity. It is very difficult to follow people that are using you for selfish ambitions and purposes. The character and credibility of leaders is essential for members to trust, follow, and submit to them.

Karen and I left a church that we had faithfully served in for 13 ½ years. I had been extremely busy with ministry, and much of it was doing things that the Lord had told me not to do. The other elders insisted I do it. I heard the Lord tell Karen and I to go to another church. When I discussed it with the Senior Pastor, he gave me some advice that clearly let me know that we could not walk together any longer. He told me that my large family was hindering me from ministry and that I should get a vasectomy. He told me that I was a champion and this was a championship team. The church that I had mentioned to him was not a championship team. It was full of arrogance. Everything he said confirmed that I was to leave the church. It was one of the best things that I could have done. We enjoyed a wonderful season of rest at the other church, which is what we needed before being sent out by the Lord to do some other kingdom work. The point of this is that when we cannot trust the leadership, and the counsel of leadership, we need to move on. Trust is essential in relationships.

Why is membership important? It is important because you are important to God. He wants to make sure that members are well cared for. As we look at both sides of this verse, the leaders and the members, both have responsibilities and are obviously connected. Leaders must have character and earn the trust and respect of members. They must take responsibility for the flock seriously. They must be responsible before God and also before the members. The church members also have responsibilities.

4. Ministry

As we look at various passages, we find that we are members of a body. We saw in Ephesians 4 that the whole body was being fit together by individual parts or members. We also see in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 that the church is referred to as a body with many members. Though the Bible does not talk of membership, it does refer to each of us as members of the body.

The Saints at Philippi

(1 Corinthians 12:12) "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ."

God has called every member in the body to do the work of ministry. Paul is very clear about this in Ephesians 4. The fivefold gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are responsible for equipping the members for the work of service or ministry. Every believer is to be a minister. We have erroneously developed the concept that the pastor is the minister. The leaders are to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The saints or the body is to do the work of ministry.

(Ephesians 4:11-12) "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"

What are they equipping the body for? The body needs to be equipped for the work of service or ministry. The way that the body grows and is built up is through the proper working of each individual part. Every joint needs to supply.

(Ephesians 4:16) "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

A. Individual part. Each believer is member or part.

Notice that the word that keeps being used in Ephesians is the body of Christ. The body of Christ is built up by the proper working of each individual part. Each of us is a part or member of the body. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 12 for just a few minutes. The first thing that we see is that we are members of the body of Christ.

(1 Corinthians 12:12-14) "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. {13} For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. {14} For the body is not one member, but many.

B. I am important.

The next thing that we see is that each one of these parts is vitally important. Paul makes the value of the individual part very clear. He says two things about this importance. First, there is not to be any devaluation of ourselves. We are not to say "I am not needed." We are not to think we are needed less because we are not this or that. We should not be comparing ourselves with others. God has made each of us an important part. We are all needed, and we are not to think less of our part. A healthy attitude says, I am needed in this body. What I have to offer is important. A healthy attitude feels good about the ministry they have to offer.

(1 Corinthians 12:15-21) "If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. {16} And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. {17} If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were

The Saints at Philippi

hearing, where would the sense of smell be? {18} But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. {19} And if they were all one member, where would the body be? {20} But now there are many members, but one body. {21} And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

C. You are important.

The third thing that we notice is that we should not devalue other members of the body. We cannot say to other people that we have no need of you. We need to learn to appreciate and value the gifts, abilities, and ministry of others in the church. If someone is doing janitorial work and cleaning the church toilets, it is a very important ministry. Try going to a dirty gas station to use the bathroom. You will quickly learn to appreciate and value the person in the church cleaning the toilets.

The person working the nursery is extremely valuable and should be appreciated. If there is no one available and the child is kept in the service with the mom, she may be so preoccupied with little Johnny that she cannot be attentive to the message. She is concerned with Johnny making too much noise, being too whiney, crawling down the aisles, or being hungry, or needing to be changed, or a host of other things. Her mind is pre-occupied with Johnny. Yes, she has come to church, but no, she has not been able to receive much. She would have had less stress just keeping Johnny at home that morning. Does this mom appreciate and value the nursery worker? Absolutely yes.

We could say the same thing about every bit of the ministry done in the church. All are needed, and all should be valued by others. As a church, let's learn to express value and appreciation for others. When you receive your bulletin from the greeter, tell the person thank you for welcoming you this morning. Say something encouraging to the greeter to let that person know how much you value and appreciate them.

Make a point to tell the sound team that you appreciate them serving that day. Tell the worship team members how much you were blessed by their ministry that day. Tell someone how much you appreciate the phone call or email that they sent you this week. Tell them how much it encouraged you, and made you feel appreciated.

In Hebrews 10:24-25, we are exhorted to consider how to stimulate and encourage one another. One of the primary ways of doing this is by showing appreciation to one another. That is what Paul is telling the Corinthians. We should value what we do, and we should value and show appreciation for what other members in the body do.

(Hebrews 10:24-25) "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, {25} not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near."

Conclusion

When we become a member of a body, there must be a joining or connecting. If we were speaking medically, there would be a surgical attachment. In church membership, there needs to be a spiritual attachment. The legal transaction is one of identity. It is specific and measurable; it is an allotment. It is one of accountability. The spiritual surgery or attachment is needed for proper placement and

The Saints at Philippi

function in the body.

The stadium Christianity model has produced lots of church members. There is not much care and not much accountability. There is also not much body ministry. People have not been spiritually attached. The church needs to find out what member or part of the body a person is, and then attach them properly. This is not a simple surgery. This is a process.

Many people do not know their spiritual gift. Many hurt and wounded people don't care what their spiritual gift is. We need to help people get well, and then find their place in the body. The question for new members is not if you are going to do something, but what are you going to do. Every person needs to be doing something. There must be a spiritual attachment and a training and rehabilitation process so that the member is functioning properly.

I would like to do something very different this morning. I want to do some spiritual surgery this morning. I want us to properly attach some members to this body.

I would like to have my children come up front. Next, I would like to have James, Jeff, Vickie, Betty, and Lee come forward. This is the remnants of the original Core Team that we started with. James was our first member. Then, Jeff and Vickie joined. Then, Lee and Betty joined. We want to properly receive all of you into the household. We want to welcome you into the East Mountain Family. We want to commit to you that we will care for you and watch over you. You filled out paperwork and made commitments, but we never completed the transaction.

Now, I would like to have the rest of you who have already joined our body to come forward. This would include Bob and Carole Duncan, Cheryl Davis, Danielle Clarke, Jim and Donna Little, Bill and Rachele Lotgering, Ray and Rosie Arambula, David and DeeDee Zimpelman. I would like to ask the original group a question.

Do you receive these individuals and families into our church family? Do you accept responsibility to care for them and to honor them? As the pastor, I also commit to care for you and to watch over you. We receive you into the body.

Father, we thank You for the allotment that You have given to us. Father, I believe that this is just the beginning of the inheritance that you are giving to us in the East Mountains. Father, I ask You to help all of us fulfill our responsibilities to one another. I ask You to bless our family and cause Your face to shine upon us. I ask You to make this a household of love for You and for other people. May people see the love of Christ in us and know that we are Christians and that we are from the East Mountain Vineyard, by our love. Father, make us a body, not just an assembly. Father, may each individual find purpose and function in the body. Help us to identify our unique calls and responsibilities in the body. Help us to be faithful in our service to the body. Help us to encourage and honor one another as we serve together. May every joint supply. Build us up as each individual part works properly. Father, make us one body, with one name, with one identity, with one hope of our calling, with one Lord, and one faith. Make us one, just as You and the Father are one. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction (Phil 1:1)**1. Family**

- A. Family** _____. (Rom 1:1, 1:7, 16:3-15)
- Churches were known as _____. (1 Tim 3:5, 3:15)
- B. Loving Family** _____
- We are called to _____ and _____ one another.
 - We are called to _____ those outside our family.
- C. Family _____
- D. Family _____ (Pro 22:6)
- E. Family _____
- F. Family _____

2. Allotment (1 Peter 5:2-3)

- Cleros means a part or a _____.
- Tithes and offerings were an _____ for the priests and Levites. (Num 18)
- God gave each tribe an allotment of _____ for an inheritance. (Josh 13-15, Ez 45:1-4)
- The allotments were _____ and _____.
- Each church is given an _____ of people to take care of.

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3. Responsibility

- Responsibility and accountability are important because God wants people to be well _____ for and protected. (Heb 13:17, Acts 20:28-30)

A. The Responsibility of _____ (Heb 13:17)

- Leaders must give _____ to God.

B. The Responsibility of _____ (Heb 13:17)

- Members cannot obey and submit if they do not _____ leadership.

4. Ministry (1 Cor 12:12)

- Every member is to be a _____.
- Members are to be equipped for _____. (Eph 4:11-12)
- The body is built up by the proper _____ of each individual part. (Eph 4:16)

A. Each member is an _____ part. (1 Cor 12:12-14)

B. _____ am important. (1 Cor 12:15-21)

C. _____ are important.

- We should _____ one another. (Heb 10:24-25)

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