

Living as one body through the one Bread of Life (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Though restrictions may cause us to feel separated, those conditions do not define us as believers. Rather we may know that we who are many are indeed one body, the body of Christ, and members one of another. Knowing this, we should also live it, even as we confess these truths when we together partake of the bread.

- I. ***We confess a common spiritual experience: We are one body because we all partake of the same one bread.***
 1. The one bread that makes us one is not the physical bread which we eat, though it is symbolized by it, rather by one Spirit we become one body (1 Corinthians 12:13).
 2. Jesus used the figure of bread and partaking bread to illustrate believing on Him. He is the true Bread, the Bread of Life, who stills all spiritual hunger and thirst (John 6:32–35, 47–48).
 3. Those who come to Jesus receive eternal life, His life, because He gave Himself for us (cf. Luke 22:19).
- II. ***We confess a unity in diversity: We who are many are one body because we all partake of the same one bread.***
 1. There is one body. The believer is united with Christ who by His Spirit indwells every believer, uniting them into one body.

The believer is both vitally joined to Christ (cf. 1 Cor 6:15) and with other believers. Though many and different members, they make one body (1 Cor 12:12, 22, 25–27; cf. Romans 12:4–5; Ephesians 3:6).
 2. There are many, different members (1 Cor 12:14; Romans 12:4–5). They have divinely designed, purposeful differences for the benefit of one another and of the body as a whole.

The connection of all to one another is illustrated by Paul’s statement that if one suffers all suffer (1 Cor 12:26). “Suffering” under the restrictions from Covid-19 has included in the world an increase in alcohol use, abuse in homes, use of pornography, divorce, and suicide. The church community is not immune to temptations. Are you willing to serve those who might be suffering?
- III. ***We confess a responsibility to live out these truths of sharing life in Christ and being members of one body.***
 1. *“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31).

The contextual concern was for another person’s conscience (10:27–30), indicating that having a concern for someone else is acting to the glory of God. Earlier (10:16–21) eating and drinking concerned the cup of blessing and the bread being broken contrasting honoring God with demonic worship at the table of demons. The chapter began (10:3–4) with a reference to Israel eating and drinking from which they should have learned spiritual lessons, as should we from the bread and cup. A desire to bring glory to God should motivate your choices in our present circumstances.
 2. *Be thankful* (1 Cor 10:30) and do not test God or grumble against Him (1 Cor 10:9–10).

Verse 30 implies what is taught elsewhere that giving thanks is a general responsibility. Israel denied God’s good care (Numbers 21:4–6; 16:41–49). The Christian by thankless grumbling denies Christ’s care for His own body (cf. Ephesians 5:29–30). Therefore, give thanks without grumbling (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 2:14). Our current circumstances have stripped away much which we enjoy and allowed us to see our hearts. Are you resting thankfully in Jesus’ care? Give thanks and let His peace guard your hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7).
 3. *“Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor”* (1 Cor 10:24).

For the sake of another person’s conscience, the believer should abstain eating meat offered to idols. Even the good of a pagan was in mind (cf. Galatians 6:10). In general consider others more significant and look out for their interests (Phil 2:3–4). Serving others in humility fosters the experience of unity (cf. Phil 1:27). For example, we gather as believers in whatever form is to the glory of God with the edification of others in mind (cf. 1 Cor 12:26; cf. Hebrews 10:24–25).
 4. *“Do not pass judgment on one another.”*

The divisions in the Corinthian church (11:18–19; ch 1) were contrary to God’s purpose for the church (12:25). Divisions can arise through judging motives and actions not defined by Scripture. In such cases, like eating meat or which day to esteem, do not pass judgment on others because each will give account to God (Romans 14:4, 10, 12). Distinguish between commands, examples, and cultural practices to avoid unwarranted judging. Our current situation is a broad mixture. Encourage giving glory to God (which includes obedience), seeking the good of others above ourselves, and then do not judge or despise another, but pray and encourage each other.

Christ’s sacrifice is the basis for believers becoming one body, Christ’s body. Live then toward one another as Christ has lived, to the glory of God, in humble submission, and thinking of others more highly. And let Christ be the judge.

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- What might indicate whether your actions are for God’s glory (or not)?
- When are you tempted to grumble about current conditions? What can you do to counter the grumbling?
- Evaluate your overall participation in the life of the Body. Where have you sought the benefit to others above your own good? Where might you need to improve?