

# GIMME GOD!

## Church Service Packet

### Body Parts

1 Corinthians 12:14-31

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Welcome to the Gimme God! Worship Service. We have tried to make these resources as easy to use as possible. The sermons and prayers have been formatted with plenty of space to write in between the lines. Please feel free to make changes that will be most appropriate for your church.

To print the children's bulletin for ages 3 to 6, copy pages 18 and 19 onto sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper (double-sided) and fold. To print the children's bulletin for ages 7 to 12, copy pages 20 and 21 onto sheets of 8.5 x 11 paper (double-sided) and fold. **[Important Note: When printing children's bulletins, in the "Print" dialog box, please make sure you have the "Page Scaling" option set to NONE. Do not "fit" or "shrink" to fit the printable area. Feel free to contact us if you have problems printing.]**

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# Sermon

In the spirit of Paul's message to the Corinthians about the function of the various parts of the body, I thought I would begin today with some interesting facts about our bodies.

- Your brain generates more electrical impulses in a single day than all of the world's telephones put together.
- Your stomach produces a new inner layer every two weeks; otherwise it would digest itself.
- Every second, your body replaces nearly 17 million cells. Every second. That's over one billion cells per hour.

Pretty amazing, huh? How about a couple of more complicated body facts.

- We work our fingers by remote control. There are no muscles inside the fingers. The muscles which bend the finger joints are located in the palm and forearm, and are connected to the finger bones by tendons, which pull on and move the fingers like the strings of a marionette.
- Your vital organs are called *vital* not only because they are vital to life, but also because they are vital to one another. Your lungs, for example, breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. The lungs

transfer oxygen to the blood, which is carried to the heart for distribution throughout the rest of the body. The blood carries carbon dioxide back to the lungs, where it is absorbed and exhaled. It's a beautiful system.

It is not unlike the larger system we see in the environment of the earth.

As we exhale carbon dioxide from their bodies, it is absorbed by all the plant life around us. And as the plants use this carbon dioxide for life, they expel oxygen. So, just as the organs of our bodies work in concert with each other to sustain life, our bodies work *AS* organs in concert with nature in order to sustain life on the planet.

It's a beautiful system!

## **Unified Individuals**

But it also illuminates one of the many paradoxes in the Christian life. And that is this: God created us to be unique individuals who exist in unity. This is what Paul was trying to say in his letter to the Corinthians. Each one of us is special, but God designed our individuality to work within the context of a community. This is important to understand, because there are two ditches on either side of this road that we commonly fall into.

## Uniformity

The first ditch is the one that says there is no individuality. In this ditch, we try to make everyone look the same. We try to achieve uniformity in one of two ways: either by ignoring or downplaying the things that make us diverse or—God forbid!—by attempting to obliterate the things that make us unique!

This is not God's attitude. God highly values individuality! He loves wild variety. For instance, He is the Creator of both the giraffe and the alligator. He obviously doesn't want things to all look the same. He created this world to be a place of outrageous variety. There is room in His Kingdom for every different kind of creature you can think of. And that includes us. Each one of us is created special and unique.

You are an original masterpiece. You have unique DNA, unique fingerprints, and even a unique *tongue* print. God does not make copies, and there is no way He can replace you. You are one-of-a-kind! So hang on to the things that make you a unique individual, and don't fall into the ditch of trying to make everyone else be like you.

## Elitism

But while we're holding onto what makes us special, we shouldn't fall into the ditch on the opposite side of the road, which is the ditch of discord and elitism. God creates wildly individual things,

but just like the different parts of our bodies, He creates these individual things to fit together perfectly into an integrated system.

As John Donne famously wrote, “No man is an island.” We are not meant to live in disconnected individuality, but to live as an integrated community where every part contributes to the whole. That’s what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians about the different gifts that make up the church.

Every person is unique, and that means that every person’s set of spiritual gifts is also unique. And, instead of downplaying the gifts of others, we should realize that we need *every* gift in order to make the church run smoothly, just as the body needs ALL of its parts to make a fully-functioning, efficient human being.

**[If you’d like to, insert some information about or praise for  
the specific lay ministries of your own church here.]**

## **Why God Creates Community**

So, we all have spiritual gifts. Recognizing that, and realizing that the church needs everyone’s gift is nothing new. But today, I’d like to take this one step further with you. We know that God doesn’t create us to live in isolation. But why not? WHY doesn’t God create islands? Why doesn’t He create standalone entities?

Listen to 1 John 4:8—“Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

God IS love. That’s probably one of the most famous statements of the Bible. God is love.

That doesn’t only mean that God loves us and treats us with love. It also means His very nature is love, and that automatically implies relationship. Actually, when you think about it, God Himself exists in a community—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

## **God’s Creation Perpetuates His Nature**

So, it should be no surprise that God perpetuates His own nature in His creation. The Bible says that we were created in God’s image, and that includes the idea that we were created to love and to be in community with God and others. In order to be in a community, we must love, and love is based on the process of selfless giving and taking.

We need look no further than our own bodies to see a wonderful example of this! That’s why it’s no coincidence that 1 Corinthians 13, the famous chapter on LOVE immediately follows 1 Corinthians 12. Our bodies are a little microcosm of love and how it works.

Think about that for a moment. Every part of your body exists in relationship to all the other parts. No part of your body is an island. No part exists by itself. If you disconnect any part of your body from the rest of your body, it will die, and the whole rest of the body will suffer. If I cut off one of my arms and put it on the table, it won’t be able to do anything. It won’t be able to move or

function. And the rest of my body will suffer because it will have had a large portion of its effectiveness stripped away.

## **Give and Take**

Every part of your body *gives* something to all the other parts, and every part of your body *takes* something from all the other parts. In that way, your body is a LOVE machine, with all its parts engaged in a selfless cycle of giving and taking.

Let's take your cells as an example. Normally, every cell in your body participates in this ongoing cycle of give and take . . . normally. But sometimes, cells go awry. Sometimes they stop participating in the *giving* part of the cycle and just start hoarding everything. We have a name for those cells. Do you know what it is?

Cancer.

Cancer cells are cells that have ceased to give anything back to the body. They hoard resources and multiply, getting bigger and bigger—and that's how a tumor eventually shows up on a body scan. If the rogue cells can't be dealt with, they will eventually suck the life out of the whole body.

## **Christ's Body**

That's why Paul said that all the parts of the body must give and take to all the other parts of the



body. In the same way, God designed us to live as parts of HIS body, the church, and that's why He has given us gifts in order to serve one another.

When we serve each other, we are acting like God, for He is the greatest giver in the universe. And when we recognize and appreciate the gifts of others, we are also acting like God, for He doesn't hoard honor and glory for Himself, but gives honor to His creatures.

## **Greater Than the Sum**

At a county fair one year, there was a horse-pulling contest. The crowd was impressed by the sight of the large horses pulling huge and heavy loads, all the muscles of their bodies straining to reach the finish.

The winning horse pulled 4500 pounds. The runner-up pulled 4000 pounds. And then the crowd was astonished when the two horses were teamed together, because together, they pulled 12,000 pounds! That's 3,500 pounds *more* than *either* of them were able to pull individually.

This is a beautiful example of how God's gifts work. We are fearfully and wonderfully made as individuals. And because God is a giver, He gives spiritual gifts to everyone. Some gifts may look more important than others. Some gifts may get more attention than others. But God IS love, and that means that there is no "second place" in His creation. *Every* person is important. *Every* gift is important.

And when we willingly unite God's gifts in love, they multiply. We don't just see the sum of our parts, but something *greater* than the sum of our parts. This is God's nature, the nature of love, to always be giving more and more and more. It is His nature to take what is already good and multiply it.

And I hope we will continue to give Him every opportunity to multiply His good gifts in and through us.

# Prayers, Etc.

## **INVOCATION**

Beautiful, beneficent Creator, Your creation is amazing. Your loving nature shines through in everything You have made. Come now and create something new and beautiful within us. Amen.

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

We are the body, and Christ is the head. As we come to worship Him, He will help us appreciate our gifts and the gifts of others. Oh come, let us worship the One who makes *us* one, as members of His body.

## **PARTICIPATORY PRAYER** *(may be spoken together with the congregation)*

God of all creation, everything You make is good. We see that it is good and You are good. When we have acted in ways that mar Your creation, You have responded with the energies of grace and mercy. We know that You alone can bring something beautiful from the ugliness of our lives.

Amen.

## **ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE** *(may be spoken by pastor after the Participatory Prayer)*

The Psalmist said God created your inmost being and knit you together in the womb. He knows you intimately. You are very special to Him. He created you, and He is re-creating you. Let's rest in that assurance today. Amen.

## **CALL FOR THE OFFERING**

God creates us to work together in love, because He is love. And love is based on the principle of giving and taking, which means living with open hands. As our hands remain open, we are available to receive blessings from God, and we are also available to share blessings with others. As we give today, we have the opportunity to be an open channel of His blessing to the world around us. Today's offering is for . . . *(omit if your offering is not specially designated)*

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Generous God, You are always giving to us. You have blessed us in so many areas of our lives—with spiritual gifts, financial gifts, and gifts of friends and family. Thank You for giving us the opportunity to return these gifts to You so we may enjoy the privilege of giving to others as You do.

## CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

God of love, You inspire us with the way You create. Instead of hoarding honor and glory for Yourself, You share spiritual gifts with us. Instead of hoarding power for Yourself, You have given us the power to choose. Instead of hoarding riches for Yourself, You have poured all kinds of wealth into our lives.

Your creation is intricate, delicate, and beautiful. It is amazing to witness the way Your love designs individual parts to work together. We aspire to be more like You, to give honor to those who seem less deserving, and to not always vie for the spotlight.

Since we are familiar with Your giving nature, we comfortable to come into Your presence and share our concerns with You. **[insert the specific needs of your congregation here]**

As the Head of the body, thank You for honoring us—the “lesser” parts—with Your presence, Your love, Your gifts, and Your mercy. We are in awe of You. Amen.

## BENEDICTION

And now, may the great Head of the body fill you up with love so that, together, we can be His hands, feet, eyes, and ears to touch lives around us. Amen.

# Children's Story

*Method: Conversation*

*Purpose: To help children understand how the body of Christ works.*

*Suggested Props: Perhaps some pictures of different parts of the body or a Mr. Potato Head doll*

Good morning, boys and girls. Today, I have a question for you. Which part of your body do you think is the most important? Why?

*[Allow time for children to think and answer. Hopefully you will get lots of different answers.]*

It seems pretty hard to pick one body part that's more important than all the others, huh? If I don't have a nose, I can't smell anything. But I don't have hands, I can't touch anything. And I need my knees so I can bend my legs. And what if I didn't have a tongue? I couldn't talk or chew food.

So we really can't pick out one part of our body and say, "This one part is more important than all the others."

And the church is just like that, too. God calls each of us a special part of *His* body. And you and me and all the other people here today have been given special gifts that are all supposed to work together—just like the organs in a body.

So, when we look around at other kids or adults, we can't think to ourselves, "Wow, *I'm* more important than they are!" No, God made each one of us very special, and if any one of us was missing, it would be like you cut your arm off. And you'd really miss your arm if you cut it off!

So, as you go back to your seats, I want you to think about some ways that you can be a good part of the body. Maybe you can say something nice to someone as you leave today. Or maybe you can help somebody put on their jacket. No matter how small you are, *you* have an important part to play in God's body, and He is so excited that you are here!

# Responsive Reading

God, You are a brilliant Creator.  
**Your ingenuity is unparalleled.**

God, You are an outrageous Giver.  
**Your heavenly storehouse overflows with blessings.**

God, You give honor to Your creation.  
**In Your eyes, everyone is important.**

We praise You, Lord,  
**for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Help us to recognize and honor the specialness in others  
**as You do.**

# Hymn

## Master Creator, God Most High

sung to the tune of *Built on the Rock* (Kirken Den Er Et)

Master Creator, God most high,  
We see Your love in creation.  
Your gifts, bestowed in full supply,  
Bind us as one Holy Nation.  
You are the head, and we the parts  
One pulse of love in all our hearts.  
Beautiful, functioning body!

Temples of flesh are where You dwell  
Not in cathedrals of glory  
So that our lips Your love may tell  
And may continue Your story:  
You, whom the heavn's cannot contain,  
Become the Guest we entertain  
When we invite You to enter.

You honor us with all your gifts,  
Blessing the parts that are "lesser."  
Your word of praise, our spirit lifts,  
You're such a wonderful Blessor!  
Your special gifts make us unique,  
But, in Your love, we choose to seek  
Honor for others around us.

*Words by Kelley Lorencin*  
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# Song Suggestions

## Hymns

Blest be the tie that binds (Dennis)

*Words and music by John Fawcett and Hans G. Nageli*

In the heart of Jesus (Heart of Jesus)

*Words and music by Alice Pugh and C.H. Forrest*

The church's one foundation (Aurelia)

*Words and music by Samuel J. Stone and Samuel S. Wesley*

## Praise Songs

Better is one day

*Words and music by Matt Redman*

© 1995 Thankyou Music

How beautiful

*Words and music by Twila Paris*

© 1990 Ariose Music

Shout to the North

*Words and music by Martin Smith*

© 1995 Curious? Music UK

We are His hands

*Words and music by Mark Gersmehl*

© 1984 Word Music LLC

Paul said we are the parts of Christ's body.

Who is the head of the body?

Trace the letters below, then circle the correct number.

JESUS  
IS THE  
HEAD



How Many Words?

2

3

4

# Wee Worship

ages 3 to 6

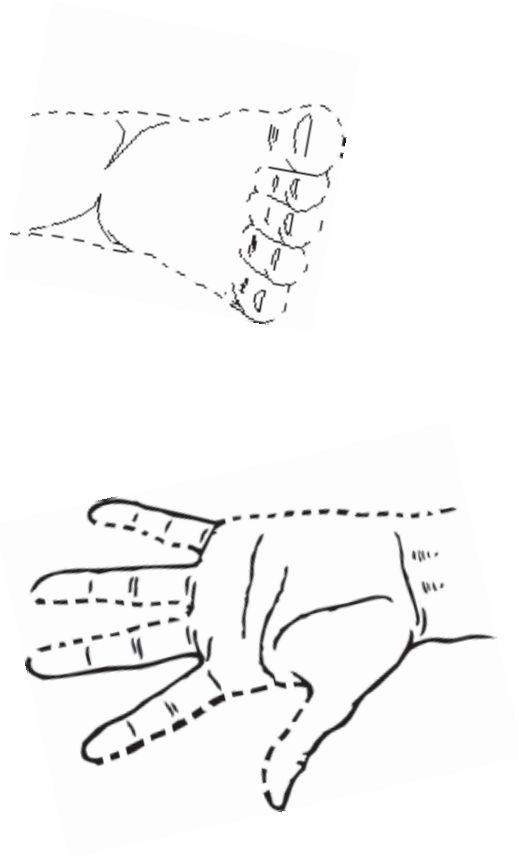
1 Corinthians 12:14-31



## The Body of Christ

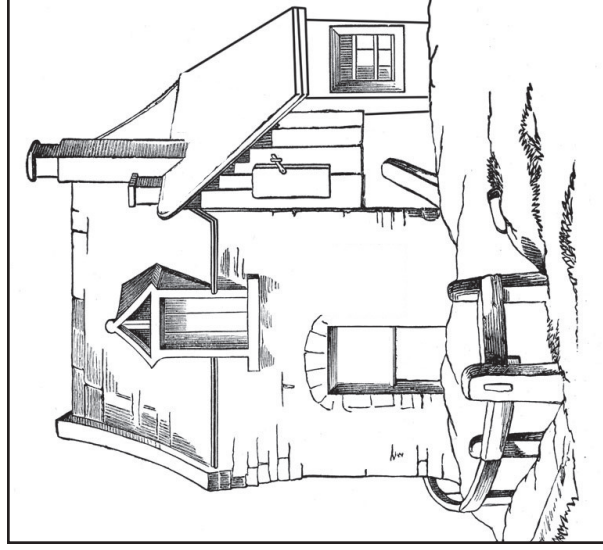
We are the parts of Christ's body.

Trace to finish the body parts. Then color.



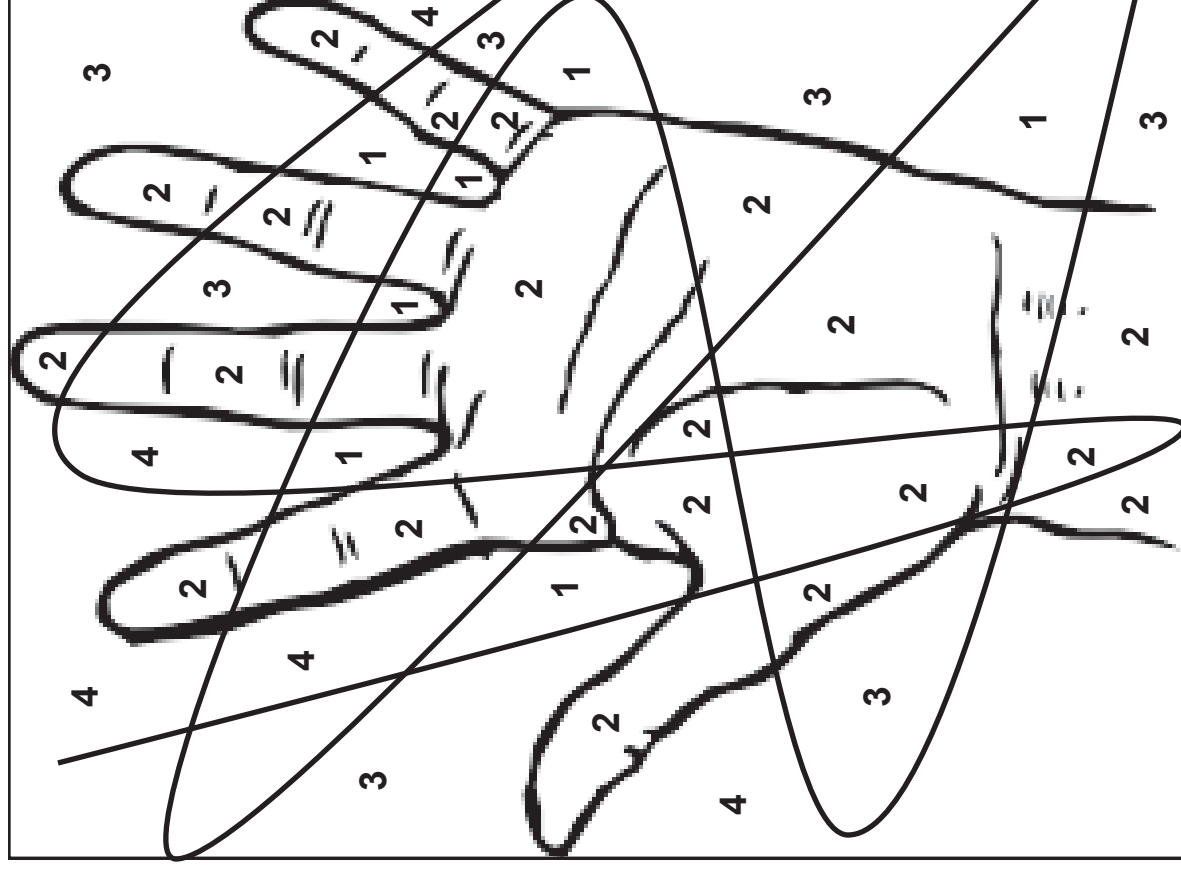
As the body, we become a house for Jesus.

Find and circle the four changes in the pictures below.  
Then, color the pictures.



Paul said every part of the body can't be a hand.

Shade in the 2's.



There are different parts, but one body.

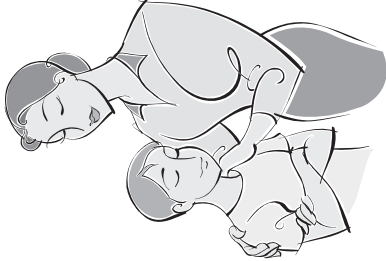
Find the letters to fill in the blanks. Write the letter that's missing from the second word of the pair.

**What holds  
the body together?**



1    2    3    4

- 1) GLASS    —    SAGS    =    —
- 2) SCOOTER    —    CORSET    =    —
- 3) SERVED    —    REEDS    =    —
- 4) TEASED    —    DATES    =    —



# iWorship

ages 7 to 12    1 Corinthians 12:14-31

The Body of Christ

If we are the body, who is the head?

Find the letters in the circles to fill in the blanks.



2    4    6,7    4,5    7    7,8    4,5    7

7,8    4    3    4    3    1    2,3

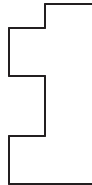
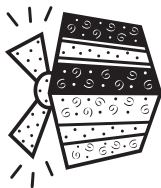
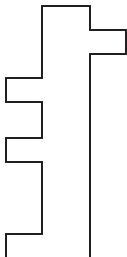
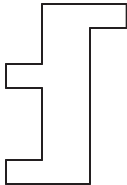
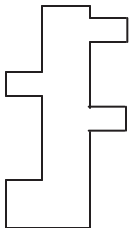
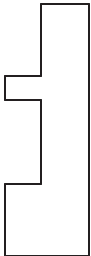
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# The Spirit gives gifts to the body.

Find out which gifts the Spirit gives by  
arranging the words into their shapes.

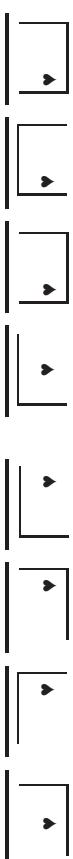
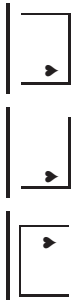
Wisdom knowledge Faith healing power Prophecy



# God created us as different parts of His body.

Use the code to find out why.

♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	
♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
M	N	O	R	S	T	U	W	Y	



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