

Life with
GOD
in community

1 CORINTHIANS 12



CHRISTCOMMUNITY
CHURCH

Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

Life with God in Community:
A Series on 1 Corinthians 12

Introduction

Our sermon series over the three weeks from the last Sunday in 2023 through the first two Sundays in 2024 will take us through a single chapter of the Bible: 1 Corinthians 12. Few chapters in the Bible equal this one for its extended treatment on the nature of the Church. Because of this, it will be a fitting way to begin the new year as we seek to continue our growth in becoming a community who love God and neighbor for God's glory, our joy, and the life of the world.

1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to the church in Corinth, a congregation that he had helped to establish during his second missionary journey (Acts 18). Although the Corinthians had been placed by Paul upon the best and only foundation for true growth in grace and godliness, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:10-11), division and immorality soon plagued the young church. Paul wrote to remind the Corinthians of the Gospel that he had preached to them, particularly to instruct and restore them in their areas of spiritual immaturity.

One significant theme that Paul addressed was the identity of the Church, particularly as that identity was challenged by division among the Corinthians. Disunity among the Corinthian Christians seems to have been occasioned not so much by ethnic differences between Jew and Gentile (as it was, for example, among the Christians in Rome) but by differences in spiritual gifting and the social status these gifts seemed to grant or imply. The Corinthians were very impressed by spiritual gifts that were extraordinary and, we might say, flashy. Prophecy and speaking in tongues fit the bill, while other gifts, less showy and much more ordinary, were esteemed by them less. Consequently, the Corinthians were in danger of overlooking and even dismissing faithful brothers and sisters whose contributions to the church were, from a merely human point of view, routine and modest.

The Apostle Paul recognized immediately that this attitude among the Corinthians threatened the unity for which Jesus died and rose again to accomplish for His people. He also discerned that it stemmed from a fundamental misunderstanding—in fact, Paul goes so far as to call it ignorance (12:1)—about who the Corinthian Christians were in community as the people of God. So, in chapter 12 Paul tackles this ignorance head-on. In this chapter we have a stunning exposition of what it means to live with God in the community of His people.

It is in the connection that 1 Corinthians 12 is especially relevant for us. Although we might not share with the Corinthians a preference for prophecy and speaking in tongues, we do share with them a tendency to forget (or perhaps never really to have let sink in) just who and Whose we are. This is exacerbated by the fact that we live and breathe in a culture that is intensely individualistic. It no more comes naturally to us than it did to the Corinthians to think of ourselves as vitally connected to one another. We are as slow to realize as they were that our worship grows with our life together, and our life together grows with our worship. We hear, for example, Jesus say that we must abide in Him (John 15:4) and we are ready to do it. But it rarely occurs to us that this is inseparable from the command that we must abide with His people (John 13:35; cf. 1 John 1:7; 3:11-18).

Our goal, then, will be to hear from 1 Corinthians 12 what the Lord teaches us about who we are as a church. Our desire will be to see our name—*Christ Community Church*—not merely rest upon us as an idealistic signifier but continue to be an ever-growing, ever-deepening reality. Our intention will be to see how we may continue to put our knowledge into practice both by more fully taking advantage of the opportunities for community that are already before us and by cultivating others through the creative use of our individual gifts. Our hope will be to leave this series ever more convinced of, and better able to walk in, the truth that our relationship with

the Father, Son, and Spirit is inextricably bound up with our relationships with each other, for God's glory, our joy, and the life of the world.

During this series our Calls to Worship will come from **Psalm 133, Psalm 134, and Psalm 135**. In these words, God will invite us to lift up our voices together in praise to His name because of all that He has done in Christ to unite us in fellowship with Him and each other. We will be called to respond with our weekly congregational response using the **Apostle's Creed**. This ancient confession will give us the opportunity to confess our faith before the Lord and each other, recognizing how our faith situates us in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in our local church family and across time and place. Our assurances of pardon will come from selected passages in **Ephesians 1 and 2**. In these words, we will hear how Jesus has secured our redemption and assures us of our forgiveness in fulfillment of the promises, and within the context of the unity, given to the gathered people of God. This will remind us that our while redemption is deeply personal, it is not a private matter between ourselves and the Lord. It is given to be celebrated and worked out with the family of God and before a watching world. The benedictory blessing will come from **2 Corinthians 13:14**, which will send us out each week with the assurance that our Triune God has, astonishingly, extended the holy and loving fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit to include all who are united to Him by faith. Because we have been drawn into this divine community in great love, we get to participate in and invite others into community in great love to God and our neighbors.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for various aspects of our life together as a church family. Each Wednesday will focus

on a particular aspect. First, we will pray for the character of our worship together on Sunday mornings, asking the Lord to deepen our excitement and participation in gathered worship. Second, we will pray for the character of our small groups, asking the Lord to further broaden this ministry in participation and scope. Third, we will pray for the character of our creative engagement in other areas of service to each other and to our unbelieving neighbors in the community, asking the Lord to make us aware of and ready to serve in the ways He has uniquely gifted and called each of us to extend the fellowship of His people for the life of the world. Saturdays will continue this theme as we consider those within our church family whom the Lord has used to bless us in specific ways, and we challenge ourselves to reach out in appreciation to them. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruit in our lives as we seek to grow in relational maturity. Our desire is to continue to grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer as we seek His power to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek for the Church to grow in the knowledge and the practice of the life we have received in Jesus Christ!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sermon Schedule

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
<i>Sunday, 12/31</i> 1 Corinthians 12:1-11	Psalm 133	Ephesians 1:3-10	2 Corinthians 13:14	
<i>Sunday, 1/7</i> 1 Corinthians 12:12-26	Psalm 134	Ephesians 2:1-10	2 Corinthians 13:14	Lord's Table
<i>Sunday, 1/14</i> 1 Corinthians 12:27-31	Psalm 135	Ephesians 2:11-18	2 Corinthians 13:14	

Weekly Congregational Response

LEADER: Christian, what do you believe?

CONGREGATION:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of
God the Father almighty.
From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

The Apostle's Creed

Weekly Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

The Week of December 31st

Monday 12/25: Psalm 133: In these verses God invites to meditate on the goodness of the unity He has accomplished for His people. In what ways are you pursuing and building relationships with others in the church to experience this gift?

Tuesday 12/26: Ephesians 1:3-10: What does the corporate nature of the language Paul uses here to describe our salvation suggest about how we can best praise the Lord for our salvation?

Wednesday 12/27 Pray for the character of our worship together on Sunday mornings. Ask the Lord to use each of us to stir one another up in excitement about all that the Lord has done and will do for us. Consider your own attitude and demeanor in worship. Ask the Lord to reveal where you may have grown cold and to stir up your affections for Him in worship.

Thursday 12/28: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11: Meditate especially on the weighty words of 1 Corinthians 12:7. In what ways are you presently using your gifts for the common good of CCC?

Friday 12/29: 2 Corinthians 13:14: In what ways has the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ been evident to you this week?

Saturday 12/30: Take time to consider your church family and the people who have helped you to grow in your affection for and engagement in Sunday worship. Seek an opportunity by phone, text, note, or in-person to let them know how they have encouraged you.

Sunday 12/31 The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for the means of grace to build us up as more confidently joyful worshippers of God.

The Week of January 7th

Monday 1/1: **Psalm 134:** In these verses we are invited to encourage those who “stand by night” to continue worshipping the Lord. Who has the Lord used in your life to set an example of perseverance in worship during the seasons when you have been weary?

Tuesday 1/2: **Ephesians 2:1-10:** Consider what it means that together we are called God’s “workmanship.” How does the assurance of your forgiveness in Christ motivate you to build others up in the Gospel?

Wednesday 1/3: **Pray** for the character of each of the Small Groups at CCC. Ask the Lord to further increase participation in them. Ask Him to reveal opportunities we may have to invite our unbelieving friends and neighbors to our small groups. Ask Him to give us success in building each other up in love and good works.

Thursday 1/4: **1 Corinthians 12:12-26:** Meditate on the significance of the analogy Paul draws between the Church and a human body. Ask Him to reveal any areas of your life in which you may be implicitly saying, “I have no need of you,” to other members of the body.

Friday 1/5: **2 Corinthians 13:14:** In what ways has the love of God been evident to you this week?

Saturday 1/6: Take time to read the Communion preparatory letter and pray as you prepare to participate on Sunday. Consider who the Lord has recently used in your life to encourage you. Take time by phone, text, note, or in-person to thank them.

Sunday 1/7: The Lord’s Day Sabbath with Bread and Cup: Pray for the means of grace to strengthen our relationships with each other for the Lord’s glory and our joy.

The Week of January 14th

Monday 1/8: **Psalm 135:** In these verses we are invited to praise the Lord because He has chosen us to be His people. Does the inclusion of others into the family of God stir your affection in joy and celebration for the goodness of God? How can you better express it in worship?

Tuesday 1/9: **Ephesians 2:11-18:** Consider what it means that Jesus is our peace, the One who has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between us. How does this assurance motivate you to creatively serve others in the church?

Wednesday 1/10: **Pray** for our church family to grow in creatively using our individual gifts in service to one another and our unbelieving friends and neighbors. Ask Him to reveal opportunities we may be missing. Ask Him to grant us the strength that He supplies for creative engagement to each other. Ask Him to use our ministry to grow our church family by new professions of faith.

Thursday 1/11: **1 Corinthians 12:27-31:** Meditate especially on the weighty words of 1 Corinthians 12:27. Consider the ways in which the preaching and shepherding ministry at CCC is designed to equip you to live out this truth.

Friday 1/12: **2 Corinthians 13:14:** In what ways has the fellowship of the Holy Spirit been evident to you this week?

Saturday 1/13: Take time to consider your church family and reach out to encourage the people who have helped you to discover and use your spiritual gifts for the edification of the body. If you are feeling disconnected from the church community, take time to reach out to one of the pastors, elders, or deacons to discuss how you might become better engaged.

Sunday 1/14: The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for the means of grace to build us up as people equipped for every good work.