

EPHESIANS 4:1-16

BODY WORKS – THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

BIBLE STUDY



Introduction to the passage for leaders

This week, we are looking at how we can bring glory to God in the church as a united body of Christ.

Paul is in prison and he is writing from a background of isolation - yet he calls the church to be connected, get on with each other and serve each other.

This chapter is all about reminding us as Christians what we are called to.

- *Called to unity*
- *Called to service and sharing*

The whole point of the gospel is us being reconciled to God following the separation of a broken relationship. It's not a matter of now having a cosy relationship with God on our own – instead, he calls us to be connected with others, and particularly other Christians, so that we can impact society.

We also don't pick and choose who else is part of God's people. We have got eternity together so we had better start getting on now!

Pray before you start that God will help us look past our personalities and cultural preferences to understand what a beautiful picture the church can give to our world.

Pray that we understand on a deeper level what being part of the body of Christ means for us personally. Ask for open and honest conversation as we investigate how best we can serve in our church.

Starter: What gifts do you have that you believe God has given you to bless others in the church?

Some questions are inspired by Ephesians: Wholeness in a broken world (Lifebuilder series)

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Read Ephesians 4 : 1-16

Let's unpack the passage.....

1. Look at verses 1-3. Thinking about what we have learnt in the last two weeks, what is our calling (v.1)? In what ways should our calling be seen, according to these verses?

2. Why do you think the characteristics mentioned in these verses are so important when it comes to unity?

(Paul does not simply mention a group of characteristics; in recognising that unity is such a challenge, he says remember what you have in common as believers and what you are working towards.)

3. According to v 4-6 what do we have in common?

4. If someone asked you why it is important for the church to be unified, what would you say?

(Look at verse 7 - We are not trying to achieve unity on our own. God is at work, giving and showing grace, and he pulls us together despite our differences. Grace is given for a common purpose of unification, and recognising its work in our lives is a key part of being unified.)

5. In verses 11-13, Paul describes gifts that Jesus gives as demonstrations of his grace (v.7).

(NB: this is one of several places where gifts are mentioned in Paul's letters and is not a comprehensive list).

What are the purposes of the gifts that are mentioned in this particular passage?

(We are a change-enabling community. When I'm integrated in the body of Christ, growth occurs – in myself and in the church.)

6. What does spiritual maturity look like (vv 14-16)?

(This is so important because if we are not growing together then other things start to happen)

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Let's unpack the passage.....

7. What waves do you think are tossing the church back and forth and what wind of teaching is blowing the church here and there at this time in history (v.14)?

So what?

8. Reflect: How do you see yourself as part of the body of Christ? How do your gifts and your actions practically carry out the purpose seen in verses 12-13?
9. Read verses 15-16 again. What does Paul say we need to do to counteract the winds and waves that batter the church in verse 14-16? What do you think are the most important things to grasp here as we consider what it means to be a 21st century church?

Ephesians 4 v 16 is Emmanuel's Verse of the Year for 2021

If you haven't already done so, why don't you commit to learning the verse?

If you are artistic, you could design a poster to reflect the imagery in the verse.

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LISTEN



**Listen to the first 21 minutes of this podcast
by Tim Mackie from the Bible Project.**

<https://bibleproject.com/podcast/ephesians-part-3-new-humanity>



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PRAY

**Pray using the words in verses 15 and 16
to direct your prayers:**

- Ask God for help to learn how to speak the truth in love.
- Ask that we might recognise the beauty and power that come from having Christ as our Head.
- Thank him that our church is growing and building itself up in love, even through the time of Covid, and that we have experienced being joined and held together at this time.
- Ask that God shows us how ‘each part does its work’ as we discover and begin to enjoy using our gifts.

