

1 CORINTHIANS 12

ONE BODY, MANY PARTS

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER: If someone asked you 'why do you go to church?', what would you reply?

Read 1 Corinthians 12 : 1-11

- What role does the Holy Spirit play in this chapter for us as believers? (**verses 3,4,7,11**).
- Why does the Spirit give gifts to the church? (**v7b**) Can you think of a practical way that you might see this carried out in the life of our church?
- Look at the gifts in **verses 7-11**.
 - What do you notice the gifts have in common?
 - Do any of them surprise you or puzzle you?



- How is the list here in **1 Corinthians 12** different from a list of how we might identify a 'successful church'?
- How do **verses 1-11** help us remember why the Spirit distributes gifts to the church?

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Read verses 12-31

Paul uses the well-known image of a body here to describe the church family.

Using this passage:

- What do you personally find helpful about this image of the church?
- What would you say to someone who feels as if they are not as useful in church life as others with different gifts?
- Is there a danger that we can look down on others in our church? Or might the way we act as a church promote some people more than others? How can we as a church ensure we treat everyone equally, as part of the same body?
- Looking at **verses 24-26**, what do you think is an indication that a church is filled with the Holy Spirit?



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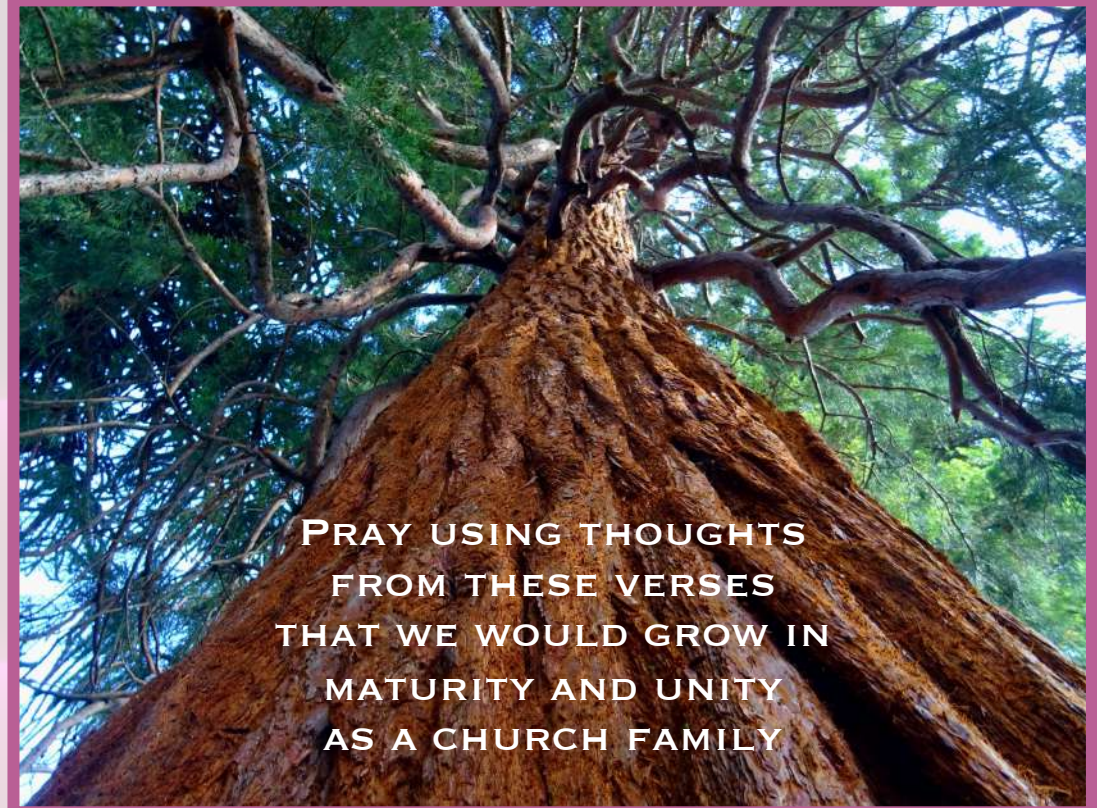
GOING DEEPER

The theme of unity comes across strongly in this chapter.

- Why is unity so important for believers? Why is it such a challenge?
- How does this chapter encourage us to grow in unity at Emmanuel?
- What can we do practically to help achieve this unity?

Look again at the two lists of spiritual gifts that are mentioned in this chapter – verses 8-10, and verse 28.

- Can you think of examples when you have been encouraged recently by someone exercising their spiritual gift?
- Do you feel as if you are able to identify your own spiritual gifting? If you feel it is hard to do so, talk as a group about how to help each other.



PRAY USING THOUGHTS
FROM THESE VERSES
THAT WE WOULD GROW IN
MATURITY AND UNITY
AS A CHURCH FAMILY

GO BACK TO THE STARTER QUESTION. WOULD YOU ANSWER IT ANY DIFFERENTLY NOW?

1 CORINTHIANS 13

LOVE IS THE BEST

BIBLE STUDY



Last week we talked about the gifts that the Holy Spirit delights to give his church family so that we are encouraged and built up as disciples. The famous passage we are looking at this week is frequently chosen for use in weddings. But it's also about the church flourishing and functioning well together.

STARTER: If you were to ask someone in Croydon to define love for you, what sort of things do you think they'd say?



Read 1 Corinthians 12 : 31 – 13 : 13

- Look at verses 1-3. A Christian who prophesies, speaks in tongues, or works hard in areas of social action, looks impressive to those looking on – both believers and those of no faith.
- What is Paul's challenge to those who work to achieve these signs? Why do you think Paul makes this point / notices these outward signs?
- Can you think of other places in the Bible that back up the way God sees faith differently from how the world might see it? (See 1 Samuel 16 v 7).

1 CORINTHIANS 13

LOVE IS THE BEST

BIBLE STUDY



1 Corinthians 12 : 31 – 13 : 13

- Looking at **verses 4-7**, what particular phrases stand out to you? Can you think of examples when someone has demonstrated any of these descriptions in a way that has been especially pertinent in your life?
- **Verses 8 -12** look forward and talk about how things will be in the future. What assurances does Paul give us as we live our lives with a heavenly perspective?
- How might we use this passage in prayers of / for:
 - repentance
 - worship
 - situations that are bringing us anxiety or concern
 - relationship struggles
 - a normal “uneventful” day



1 CORINTHIANS 13

LOVE IS THE BEST

GOING DEEPER

**Look at Jesus' command
in John 13 : 34-35**

Do you think people notice that we are Jesus' disciples because of our love for one another? If so, how? If not, why not? How could we be more noticed for our love?

**Pray about this with
your group now**

Read 1 John 4 : 7-21

What do these verses tell us about love?

**Looking back
at the start**

How do you think our church could live out love in 21st century Croydon, using these passages?

1 CORINTHIANS 14

ALL FOR BUILDING

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER: What do you think makes a church strong?



Read 1 Corinthians 14 : 1-25

Paul spends the first part of the chapter talking to the Corinthian church about the difference between *prophecy* – that is, speaking biblical truth as led by the Spirit - and *speaking in tongues* – the private, Spirit-gifted language of prayer used by individual believers.

- These may feel unusual or unfamiliar spiritual gifts to some of us.
- What is your experience of what they look like in the modern church? (Use the definitions above to help answer this).
- Are you gifted with either or both of these gifts?
- Look over these verses again and draw out why Paul says that prophecy builds the church up more than speaking in tongues.
 - Verses 1-11
 - Verses 13-19
 - Verses 23-25

1 CORINTHIANS 14

ALL FOR BUILDING

BIBLE STUDY



Read 1 Corinthians 14 : 26 - 40

(Note: verses 34-35 may seem chauvinistic or controversial to our modern eyes! However, it is believed that Paul is specifically addressing a group of women who had the habit of shouting out their questions during the gathering)



Looking back carefully at verses 26-33

- What do we particularly learn about how spiritual gifts should be managed?
- Why are they given to the church?

Talk about spiritual gifts together as we have seen them in chapter 12 : 7 – 11 and those we have looked at today in chapter 14.

- Do you think we sometimes neglect spiritual gifts in favour of more practical talents?
- What is the temptation or challenge when it comes to seeking spiritual gifts in order to appear more spiritually mature? What do you think Paul would say in response (**see verses 26; 39-40**)?

1 CORINTHIANS 14

ALL FOR BUILDING

GOING DEEPER

Read Ephesians 3 :14-19

- What can we pray for Emmanuel based on these verses?
- What do you think it looks like to commit and belong to Emmanuel so that it is built up?



Let all things be
done for building up.
I Corinthians 14:26

BACK TO THE START...

Do you think you would add or change anything to your response to the starter question?