

Teamwork

Life Group Discussion Guide on 1 Corinthians 12:4-26

Read the passage above, then continue on with the guide.

Passages like these naturally cause sports fans to think about all the ways that athletics illustrate what life is like in the body of Christ.

We are very much like a team, each with our own unique role, talent, and calling that serves for the goal of helping achieve success for the group. I am inspired to excellence in thinking about how championship teams require every person in the building from the star player to the equipment technician to clerks who sell tickets that pay everyone's salaries have to perform their jobs in order for the team to win.

Paul, however, doesn't use the example of a sports team in 1 Corinthians 12. Team sports were not as prevalent as individual sports in the Greek-speaking world. Instead, he uses the illustration of a human body – something to which every single person on the planet can relate.

This passage seems to be telling us that teamwork does not simply apply to one group of people, like athletes. Even people who never play sports need to realize that every one of us are on a team every day of our life.

Think of some of the teams on which you "play."

- Your family
- Your marriage
- Your place of employment
- Your small group
- Your church

The other genius of comparing the church to a human body is that it holds a more intimate and dependent connection to itself than even the most cohesive team of individuals. LeBron had the option to jump ship to another team. But those of us who belong to Christ don't get to choose whether or not we belong to His body.

We are each and every one a part of the Church. We are each equally indispensable.

In preparing this guide, I was listening to a conversation between theologians Al Mohler and Stanley Hauerwas. If you know about these two, you will know that they have great respect for

one another, but also have very different opinions about some issues.

Mohler asked Hauerwas to predict what the downfall of American evangelicalism would be. Hauerwas responded that our dependence and emphasis on a few larger-than-life leaders over the spiritual practices and traditions of the ordinary people in the churches would eventually lead evangelicals to fail.

I personally think that Hauerwas is correct. Strong charismatic leaders are, for sure, a gift to the overall body of Christ. But we must never make the mistake of believing that they are any more important to the health of the body than the person who sweeps the floors. Everyone has a vitally important part to play. From the person who serves in the nursery or never steps foot on a stage, but is faithful to lead her family to Christ. Even the person who struggles with great needs has a role in the body.

- Why do Christians sometimes feel as if they do not belong at church?
- Does the church sometimes play favorites with different people?
- How is a church made weaker when it begins to treat some people as more important than others?
- How have you seen a church made stronger by valuing its weaker members?

Unity in Diversity

1 Corinthians 12 highlights two very important words: unity and diversity.

Which phrases in 1 Corinthians 12:4-26 emphasize unity? For example,

- “the same Spirit”
- “the same Lord”
- “the same God who empowers them all”
- “one body”
- “all baptized”

Which phrases emphasize diversity?

- “many members”
- “varieties of gifts”
- “Jews or Greeks, slaves or free”

Now think about your own church involvement.

- What are the different ways that your church is diverse?

Life Group Discussion Guide

- Is there enough diversity in your giftedness?
- How is Christian unity made stronger through the diversity of Christian people?
- What is your role on the Christian team?
- How do you see yourself as a gift to others?