

Are You Needed?

I Corinthians 12:12-31

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Every part of the physical body is needed for it to function properly; e.g.,
 - ☛ Circulatory system,
 - ☛ Nervous system,
 - ☛ Digestive system,
2. If one part of our body is not functioning properly we don't feel whole or well (e.g., turf toe).
3. We are all familiar that the New Testament refers to the church as the *"body of Christ"*:

Eph. 1:22-23: *"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*
4. **3** There are many reasons why the Lord uses this analogy:
 - A. It expresses our intimate relationship with Christ.
 - B. It expresses Christ's supremacy over the church (i.e., *"head over all things to the church"*).
 - C. It expresses our intimate and vital connections with one another as Christians, as members of His body (I Jn. 1:1-4).
5. When a member of our physical body is not functioning properly we feel sick; our body cannot function to its full capacity; the same is true with the *"body of Christ,"* the church.
 - A. Every member of the body of Christ is needed:

Eph. 4:15-16: *"...the head — Christ — 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*
 - B. Every member of the body of Christ, regardless of abilities is needed; we each have a role to play, a *"share"* to contribute to the *"growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."*
6. Everyone has a need to belong (e.g., family, team, party, nation, etc.).
 - A. Everyone wants to belong and to contribute to the family/team's overall success.
 - B. Not all members of a team are the star (e.g., Michael Jordan, Tom Brady).
 - C. The star player cannot win the game by himself.
 - D. Every team needs *"role players"*; players who plug along, game after game, doing what they can for the success of the team.
7. When a *"role player"* can no longer contribute to the success of the team they are *"cut."*
8. The Lord's church is the most unique organization in existence.
 - A. Paul tells us the *"weaker"* *"members of the body...are necessary"*! I Cor. 12:22
 - B. God needs *"role players"*! He needs each of us doing his/her *"share"* (Eph. 4:16).
 - C. God needs humble-minded Christians willing to labor in relative obscurity, out of the limelight, for His church to be successful.
9. **4** All of us need to ask ourselves a question regarding this: Am I needed?

II. DISCUSSION:

Are you needed? YES! You're needed to...

I. **5** Set a good example:

- A. Good examples are hard to come by these days:
 - (1) Politicians? Corruption is rampant!
 - (2) Hollywood? Lifestyles are profligate! Hedonism, homosexuality, perversion, etc.
 - (3) Sports? NFL kneelers disrespect the flag and national anthem, steroid use, spoiled multi-millionaires!
 - (4) Business? Anything goes to make a buck; no loyalty to employees!
 - (5) Family? Divorce rates are through the roof!
- B. The Bible exemplified in your life will make you a very, very unique individual.
 - (1) Because it will make you an example worthy of imitating.
 - (2) The majority will not be impressed by your example, but some poor lost soul with a *"noble and good heart"* (Lk. 8:15) is watching and can be led to the gospel through your example (e.g., family members, neighbors, co-workers).
- C. Setting a good example should always be on our minds; always our concern:
 - (1) Jesus said, *"Ye are the salt of the earth....Ye are the light of the world...."* (Mt. 5:13-16).
 - (2) But, our salt is worthless unless it is savour-filled (v. 13).
 - (3) We must exercise extreme care because our *"light...cannot be hidden"* (Matt. 5:14).
 - (4) Are you letting your light to so shine that your Father is glorified? v. 16
- D. Paul informed the Corinthians, *"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men"* (2 Cor. 3:2).
 - (1) Folks are "reading" you! What does your epistle say?
 - (2) Timothy was taught, *"...be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Tim. 4:12); can that be said of you?!
- E. Setting a good example quotes:

"Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example."

—Mark Twain

"If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. But do not care to convince him. Men will believe what they see. Let them see."

—Henry David Thoreau

"Worry not that your child listens to you; worry most that they watch you."

—Ronald A. Heifetz

1 Cor. 11:1: *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."*

- F. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You're needed to...

2. **6** Attend the services of the local church:

- A. The Scriptures teach us local church membership is valuable and necessary; where individuals are identified to work and worship with the local church at a specific locale.
- B. A good example is when Saul "...assayed to join himself to the disciples..." in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).
- C. As a member of the local church, you and I have the privilege and responsibility of being present for all the assemblies of the church: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (Heb. 10:25).
- D. Let's read that whole section of scripture:

Heb. 10:24-31: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

- (1) What is the "assembling of ourselves together" designed to do? "consider one another to stir up love and good works"
- (2) What does my intentional absence, without a legitimate reason, say? "I don't really care like I should to 'stir up love and good works'."
- (3) Isn't that a sad commentary about me?! Remember our first point about setting a good example. Is my continual absence setting a good example?
- (4) In the context of Hebrews 10 what is the "willful sin" under discussion? "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"!
- (5) Where does that leave us spiritually? "trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace"!
- E. Preachers don't harp on attendance so we can boast about how many attended services.
 - (1) I'm not "harping" about it right now. I'm trying to exhort and encourage.
 - (2) Our attendance is vital for spiritual growth: ours and every member of this congregation.
 - (3) God expects us to be here! So much He calls our intentional absence a "willful sin"!
 - (4) If you intentionally miss services for no legitimate reasons remember:

Heb. 10:29, 31: "29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

- F. Are you needed? YES!

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3. **7** Do personal work:

- A. Teaching others the word of God is not just the work of elders and preachers; it is the obligation, honor and privilege of every Christian to share their faith with others.
- (1) Peter says so, “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*” (1 Pet. 3:15)
 - (2) First-century Jerusalem church members stand out in this respect; “*...those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*” (Acts 8:4)
 - (3) It was effective! Lost souls were saved, churches were planted and “*...increased in number daily*” (Acts 16:5).
 - (4) Sharing the gospel with another person is the most important thing you will ever do for them! Matt. 16:26
- Jas. 5:20:** “*let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*”; cf. Lk. 15:7
- B. All of us have a “sphere of influence” (e.g., family, friends, neighbors, co-workers).
- (1) Our individual “spheres of influence” overlap to only a small degree.
 - (2) You can reach people with the gospel that I will never be able to reach; vice versa.
- C. I challenge you to be a Cornelius, who “*...called together his kinsmen and near friends*” (Acts 10:24) to “*...hear all things that are commanded thee of God*” (Acts 10:33).
- (1) Perhaps, you are in a better position to have more good influence on your kinsmen and near friends than anyone else.
 - (2) We don’t need a “pre-packaged” Bible lesson to be effective in personal work.
 - (3) It can be as simple as giving someone a Bible, ask them to begin reading the gospels, and offer to answer their questions.
 - (4) Or, how about setting up a Bible study in your home? Invite your family, your friends, your co-workers. I would be honored to come and teach it.
 - (5) Even if it is only you; I would still love to come and study with you!
- D. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You’re needed to...

4. **8** Display a good attitude:

- A. I have a little sign on my desk Sherry gave me long ago; it reads: “Attitude is everything!”
- (1) That is so true! Attitude is everything!
 - (2) I know of an elder of a local church; he had a very important position with NASA.
 - (3) He was the Chief Retro Officer; it was his duty to make sure the spacecraft re-entered the atmosphere at the proper angle or attitude.
 - (4) If it entered at the wrong attitude, one of two things would happen: 1) it would burn up (not good for astronauts!), or 2) skip off the atmosphere and unable to land back on Earth (also not good for astronauts!); he defined attitude: “Attitude is where you are in relation to where you ought to be.”
- B. When it comes to your attitude are you “where you ought to be”?

- (1) There are way too many bad attitudes today; just watch the news for a few minutes.
- (2) Negativity, envy, pride, murmuring, ingratitude, selfishness, etc. are all around.
- C. It seems many have not learned, “*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...*” (Prov. 23:7)?
 - (1) It is up to YOU (and me!) to control [y]our thinking.
 - (2) Paul gave us some things to think about to help us get our attitude in the right place:

Phil. 4:8: “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*”
 - (3) Just think how wonderful people’s attitude would be if they thought on those “*things*”?! And, adopted the attitude of Jesus; remember when Paul said:

Phil. 2:5: “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*”
 - (4) What mind or attitude was that Paul?

Phil. 2:2-4: “*...be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*”
- D. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You’re needed to...

5. 9 Be evangelists, pastors, and teachers:

- A. These are gifts given by the Lord to equip the church to do its Christ-directed work:

Eph. 4:11-12: “*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*”

 - (1) There is a real shortage of such today.
 - (2) The church needs those who are faithful and able to teach others:

2 Tim. 2:2: “*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*”

Heb. 5:12: “*For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...*”
- B. Aspire to be qualified: There is a great need for men and women to be what bishops (pastors, elders) and their wives must be (1 Tim. 3:1-7, 11; Titus 1:5-11; Acts 18:26).
 - (1) So we have scripturally qualified men to feed and lead the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - (2) And, wives to support them in their important work.
- C. In reference to God’s Word, Paul wrote, “*...how shall they year without a preacher?*” (Rom. 10:14); we need more men:
 - (1) Dedicated to:

2 Tim. 4:2-4: “*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching*

ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

- (2) We need more men like Isaiah who say, Lord “...*Here am I; send me*” (Isa. 6:8).
- (3) Thirty years ago if someone told me I would be a gospel preacher I would have asked them what they were smoking.
- (4) But teaching the gospel is the greatest work a man can do!

1 Tim. 4:16: “*Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*”; cf. Jn. 6:68

- (5) Preachers deserve our respect and support (1 Cor. 9:14; **Gal. 6:6:** “*Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.*”).

D. Not all can preach or even teach.

- (1) But we can all support faithful gospel preachers. I know dozens crying for support!
- (2) Also, you don’t have to go to a “seminary,” or college, to preach the gospel:
 - (a) Just dedicate yourself to studying your Bible, and,
 - (b) Cultivate a zeal for reaching lost souls and edifying the brethren.

E. Will you step up to the plate?

F. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You’re needed to...

6. **10** Promote peace and unity:

A. The Lord hates 7 things including “...*he that soweth discord among brethren*” (Prov. 6:19).

- (1) In fact, Romans 16:17 teaches, “...*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*”
- (2) The Psalmist wrote: **Psa. 133:1:** “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*”

B. Unity is so important:

- (1) The Lord prayed for it: **Jn. 17:20-21:** “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 2 I that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*”
- (2) The apostles pleaded for it: **1 Cor. 1:10:** “*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*”

C. Many take unity for granted; true unity doesn’t just magically appear.

- (1) Walk with the Lord: Unity begins w/some important character traits all must develop:
Eph. 4:1-2: “*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,*”
- (2) Pursuit: Unity is something we each must pursue:

Eph. 4:3: “endeavoring (“giving diligence,” ASV; “make every effort,” NIV) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- (3) Agreement: Unity requires each of us to be on the “same page”:

1 Cor. 1:10: “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Phil. 3:16: “Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

Phil. 1:27: “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,”

Col. 3:17: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

- (4) Peace-keeping spirit: Unity requires a “peace-keeping” spirit (some are not satisfied unless everything is in turmoil!):

Rom. 14:19: “Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”

- (5) Humility: Unity requires a big dose of humility:

Phil. 2:1-4: “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

D. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You’re needed to...

7. **II** Do good works:

- A. Did you know one major criteria by which we will be judged is our “good works”?

(1) In this context I mean “good works” in the sense of how we have helped others less blessed: Matt. 25:31-46

(2) Tabitha (i.e., Dorcas) was such a woman who “...was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.” (Acts 9:36)

(3) So was Barnabas: **Acts 4:36-37:** “And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.”

(4) You and I need to imitate Tabitha and Barnabas!

- B. Among the credentials for a widow taken into the number is that she be:

1 Tim. 5:10: “well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.” (A widow is usually in economic jeopardy, but note her benevolence!)

- C. When we have the opportunity and ability to help those in need we must give them more than a “pat on the back” and a “well, I hope things get better for you.”

Jas. 2:14-17: *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

- (1) I truly fear some Christians are like that; as my dad would have said, “All blow and no show!” “All sizzle and no steak!”

- (2) We need to get serious about helping our needy brethren:

1 Jn. 3:17-18: *“But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”*

- D. Christ gave Himself for us to be a people “...zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Does this describe you?

- E. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You're needed to...

8. **12** Supply your part:

- A. When I was in high school I played football.

- (1) A football team consists of 11 players.
(2) Each player has similar duties, but not necessarily the exact same duties.
(3) Some players block, some run out to catch a forward pass, some run the ball, some throw the ball.
(4) We've all seen successful football teams; what makes them successful? When each of the 11 players does his job.

- B. The same is true concerning the church.

- (1) Each of us is like the member of a football team.
(2) We don't have to perform every duty of the “church team.”
(3) For success, each member simply needs to do their “share” of the work.
(4) Notice what Paul tells us: **Eph. 4:16:** *“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”*
(5) In this way no one member has to bear the entire load; you pitch in your “share”; I pitch in my “share”; and the next fellow pitches in his “share.”
(6) When all are doing their “share” it “causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

- C. Sadly, many churches are weak and sickly.

- (1) Recall the seven churches of Asia and the church at Laodicea:

Rev. 3:15-17: *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will*

vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' — and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked — “

- (2) As my mother used to say, “I would bet you a dollar to a donut many members of the Laodicean church were not doing their ‘share.’!”
- (3) All it would take for the church to increase/grow in many places is for there to be more members doing there “share.”!
- (4) Just think if several joints and parts of your physical body didn’t supply or work! (I know what that feels like!)
- D. Any church is handicapped from reaching its full potential when any member does not supply their vital part! “...the body is not one member, but many” (1 Cor. 12:14).
- E. Look for ways you can be more involved, “...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58).
- F. Are you needed? YES!

Are you needed? YES! You’re needed to...

9. **13** Faith/obedience:

- A. I intentionally equate **faith** with **obedience**.
 - (1) If a Christian is **faithful**, he/she is **obedient**.
 - (2) If a Christian is **obedient**, he/she is **faithful**.
- B. The equivocation of **faith** and **obedience** is the dominant theme of the Bible:
 - ☛ Garden of Eden: **Gen. 3:3**: “...God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”
 - ☛ Nation of Israel: **Deut. 30:15-16**: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, I 6 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.”
 - ☛ Days of Joshua: **Josh. 24:15**: “...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 - ☛ Babylonian captivity: **Dan. 9:4-5**: “And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, ‘O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,’”
 - ☛ Lord Jesus: **Phil. 2:8**: “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”
 - ☛ God’s hall of fame of the faithful:
 - (a) In Hebrews 11 the phrase “by faith” is used 18 times.
 - (b) Each time it describes acts of obedience!
- C. Throughout God’s dealings with man, God’s requirement for man to be pleasing to Him has been very simple:

Hab. 2:4: “...the just shall live by his faith.”; cf. Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38

(1) Jesus preached, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

(2) The Hebrew writer tells us Christ is “...the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

D. Are you ***faithful***? Are you ***obedient***? To be one is to be the other!

(1) Initial faithful obedience to the Lord is expressed by hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:22; 16:31; 17:30; 8:37; 2:38).

(2) Upon becoming a Christian we must remain obediently faithful (Rev. 2:10).

E. How about you?

2 Cor. 7:1: “...cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

2 Cor. 10:5: “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”

F. Are you needed? YES!

III. CONCLUSION: 14

I. Remember, you are needed!

- ☛ Set a good example
- ☛ Attend services
- ☛ Do personal work
- ☛ Good attitude
- ☛ Serve

- ☛ Promote unity
- ☛ Good works
- ☛ Do your share
- ☛ Faith/obey

2. Invitation

Adapted from an article, *You Are Needed*, by John Isaac Edwards