

I Am A Church Member: Functioning & Unifying

Romans 12:4-5

Key Thoughts

1. **A member is a limb, not a subscriber.** Paul's word for member, *melos*, means a body part: an arm, a hand, a finger. A subscriber can cancel; a hand can only be cut off.
2. **God restores us and puts us back to work.** Peter denied Jesus beside one charcoal fire and was restored beside another. He was not just forgiven; he was put back to work feeding Christ's sheep.
3. **A functioning member is a fisher of men.** The Great Commission's "go" means "as you are going," and it was ordinary believers, not only the apostles, who carried the gospel out of Jerusalem. Teaching others to observe means showing them how to live it, not just filling their heads.
4. **Unity is the same mission, not sameness.** Different gifts, same Spirit; different ministries, same Lord; different activities, same God, all for the profit of all. A torn net catches nothing, but a mended net goes back to work.
5. **Tune to the standard, not to each other.** Strings tuned to each other form a faction; strings tuned to Christ are in harmony. Functional but not unified, we burn out; unified but not functional, we stagnate.

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the word "member," what comes to mind first? Read Romans 12:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:27. How does thinking of yourself as a hand rather than a subscriber change the way you approach your church?
2. The gym study found people who paid, belonged, and never showed up. What are some ways a believer can be a church member on paper and never function? Which of those is most tempting for you?
3. Read John 18:18 and John 21:9, 15-17. Jesus restored Peter beside a charcoal fire and ended every question with a job. Why do you think He put Peter back to work instead of simply forgiving him, and what does that tell you about how God sees a believer who has stopped functioning?
4. Read Matthew 28:19-20. "Go" carries the sense of "as you are going," and "teaching them to observe" means showing people how to live it, not just what to know. Where are you already going every week, and who there could you help follow Jesus, not just learn about Him?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. The Corinthians lined up behind Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. How can a group of believers be completely united and still be wrong, and what keeps a church tuned to Christ (Ephesians 4:13) rather than to each other?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and 12:25. Paul says the Spirit's gifts are given "for the profit of all" and that there should be "no schism in the body." Is there a tear in the net between you and another believer right now? What is one step you will take this week to mend it?

Applications

1. **Go fishing.** Name one person you cross paths with "as you are going" this week. Pray for them by name every day, and watch for the open door.
2. **Mend a tear.** If there is a rip between you and another believer, don't wait for them to come to you. Make the call, buy the coffee, and get the net back to work.
3. **Tune to Christ.** Not to your favorite preacher, your side, or the loudest voice in the room. Open His Word every day this week and let Him do the tuning.

Closing Prayer

Father, Your Son is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and He promised to build His church. Thank You that You do not toss us in the junk drawer when we stop functioning, but restore us and put us back to work, just as Jesus did with Peter on the shore. Make us fishers of men, making disciples as we are going, and teaching others not only what You have commanded but how to live it. Mend what is torn among us. Where we have tuned ourselves to our preferences, our styles, or our favorite voices, tune us again to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Let the gifts You have given each of us be used for the profit of all, that many may be saved. Make us one body with many members, different but together, until the world sees the beauty of Christ through His Church. In Jesus' name, amen.