

Where Do I Fit In?

Have you ever wondered where you fit into the body of Christ? What your unique abilities are? How and where you can best serve God and others? This class is designed to help you discover and exercise your own God-given abilities to expand your usefulness in the Kingdom. We will examine the lives of some of the Christians in the early church and identify ways in which we may serve as they did. In our study, try to connect personally to these men and women, especially those in whom you find common ground in personality, ability, and opportunity. May you find encouragement to be faithful in what you have received!

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly...

Romans 12:6 (NASB)

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10 (NASB)

Class Outline

- **LESSON 1** — Introduction
- Gifts of Service
 - **LESSON 2** — Hospitality (Aquila and Priscilla)
 - **LESSON 3** — Support (Luke)
 - **LESSON 4** — Administrative Service (Various)
- Gifts of Teaching
 - **LESSON 5** — Public Teaching (Paul)
 - **LESSON 6** — Home Teaching (Lois and Eunice)
- **LESSON 7** — Gift of Encouraging (Barnabas)
- **LESSON 8** — Gift of Giving
- **LESSON 9** — Gift of Leading (Peter)
- **LESSON 10** — Gifts of Mercy (Dorcas and Onesiphorus)
- Gifts of Evangelism
 - **LESSON 11** — Evangelist (Timothy)
 - **LESSON 12** — Evangelism Styles (Various)
- **LESSON 13** — Wrap Up

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Lesson 1 – One Body, Many Members

The Church is a Body

Read Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, and Ephesians 4:11-16.

These passages compare the church to a human body. As we rely on the many different parts of our bodies working together, so Jesus designed the church to function best when each of us exercise our own gifts to the best of our ability. We are one body composed of many different parts. You are a part of Christ's body! Internalizing this perspective is essential to serving God effectively and faithfully.

- How is the metaphor of the human body helpful to you in understanding your place in the church?
- Do you really believe you have a part to play in the church? Why or why not?

God's Gifts to the Church

Let's look these texts again to identify the various gifts in the church. Though many of these gifts were limited to the apostolic age in the absence of completed revelation (see 1 Cor. 13:8-12, Heb. 2:3-4), some are not. Even those which have faded away can teach us an important principle: *Christ equips us with unique gifts to build up his body.*

- List the gifts mentioned in each of these passages. We will use this list to build our understanding in the rest of the class.

Romans 12:6-8

1 Corinthians 12:8-10,28

Ephesians 4:11

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Lesson 1 – One Body, Many Members

- Looking at the list above, why do you think God gave such a variety of gifts to members of the church?
- What is the purpose of these gifts (not each gift individually, but the gifts overall)? (Rom. 12:9-13, 1 Cor. 12:7,25-26, 14:12,26, Eph. 4:12-13, 1 Pet. 4:1-11)
- Where do these gifts originate? Who is working through these gifts? (Rom. 12:3,6, 1 Cor. 12:4-7, Eph. 4:7-11, 1 Pet. 4:10)
- Which of these gifts require miraculous ability or have ceased to exist? In your list, highlight or circle the gifts that continue to exist today.
- What attitudes or ideas may prevent you from identifying or properly exercising your God-given gifts? (Rom. 12:3, 1 Cor. 12:14-31)
- In this class we will focus mainly on the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8. To which of these do you most naturally connect?

You Have a Stewardship

Read Matthew 25:14-30. There is no “zero-talented” servant in this parable; neither is there one in Christ’s church. We all have something to use.

- How does this parable relate to the role you fill in Jesus’ kingdom?
- How do you hope to grow in this class?

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Lesson 2 – The Gift of Service | Hospitality: Aquila and Priscilla

Aquila and Priscilla's Example

Where were Aquila and Priscilla in each of the following passages and who was in their home?

- Acts 18:1-4
- 1 Corinthians 16:19 (note verse 8)
- Romans 16:3-5

What do you learn from this example of hospitality?

It is said that hospitality is one of the primary virtues of the ancient Middle East. Why do you think hospitality was so important? (see Genesis 18:1-8, Judges 19:14-21, 2 Kings 4:8-10)

Hospitality in the Body of Christ

List three practical things that hospitality requires today.

Why do you think shepherds/overseers are required to be hospitable? (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

What principles of hospitality does Jesus teach in Luke 14:12-15?

What are some challenges or obstacles we may face in showing hospitality?

Brainstorm some ways hospitality can be used to build the body of Christ today. How can you initiate or support these efforts? (Hebrews 13:1-2, 1 Peter 4:8-9, Acts 2:46, 20:20)

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Lesson 3 – The Gift of Service | Support: Luke

Luke, the Careful Historian

What do you learn about Luke and his work from the introduction to his gospel (Luke 1:1-4)?

How did God use Luke's talents of researching and writing to benefit us today? What can we learn about the importance and use of similar talents today?

Luke, the Faithful Companion

In the following passages, note where Luke and Paul are and what they experienced together –

- The “we” sections of Acts

16:10-17 –

20:5-15 –

21:1-18 –

27:1-28:16 –

- Paul's letters

Colossians 4:14 –

Philemon 24 –

2 Timothy 4:11 –

How valuable do you think Luke's companionship was to Paul during these times? How do you think Luke's presence helped Paul through these experiences?

Supporting the Body of Christ

What do these passages teach about our responsibility to support each other in “behind the scenes” ways? (Heb. 10:32-34, 13:3, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, Acts 16:27, Rom. 16:2, Phil. 4:2-3)

What kind of “supporting” roles are needed in the church today? How and why are these essential? Can you fill any of these needs?

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Lesson 4 – The Gift of Service | Various Administrative Roles

Letter Couriers

To whom did Paul entrust the responsibility of carrying and delivering the following letters? Why do you think Paul chose them?

- *Romans 16:1-2*
- *Colossians 4:7-9*

What might have been involved in carrying a letter from an apostle? What possible sacrifices were made or precautions taken?

What lessons do you learn from these individuals? How might someone fill a similar role in Christ's body today? (in our digital age, don't restrict your thinking to only carrying a letter)

Financial Stewards

Through whom did the Philippians send money to Paul in Philippians 4:14-18? What do you infer from Philippians 2:25-30 about this man's character?

What practical wisdom does Paul exhibit in organizing contributions for the saints in Jerusalem in passages like 1 Corinthians 16:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 8:18-21?

Why is the role of handling the church's money important for the effective functioning of a local church? Do you think it is under-appreciated?

Appointed Deacons

Over what needs did the seven men in Acts 6:1-6 have responsibility? How did their role help the work of the church in Jerusalem?

Why is it important for a local church to have designated servants over specific tasks? (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

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Lesson 5 – The Gift of Teaching | Public Teaching: Paul

Paul, The Teacher

How did “teaching” relate to Paul’s role as an apostle of Jesus Christ? (1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11) What difference is there (if any) between *preaching* and *teaching*?

From Paul’s example in Acts 17:1-4, what is involved in effective teaching?

What was Paul’s ultimate goal in teaching? (1 Timothy 1:5)

Teaching in the Body of Christ

Does Hebrews 5:12 require all Christians to become teachers in order to be mature?

Why must shepherds be “able to teach”? (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9, see also Eph. 4:11)

What warnings are given to those who wish to become teachers in James 3:1-12 and 1 Timothy 1:3-7?

Not every teacher has the same style. How can we appreciate different teachers’ styles?

Though only men should teach in the public assembly (1 Tim. 2:11-14) where have older women been given responsibility to teach and why? (Titus 2:3-5) What are some ways you can fill this need?

If you are a teacher, or wish to become a teacher, what steps will you take to prepare yourself and improve your skills to better edify the body of Christ?

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Lesson 6 – The Gift of Teaching | Home Teaching: Lois and Eunice

This lesson is different than the rest in that its primary focus is on the home (not the local church), but I included it for reasons I will share in class. I hope it is of great value to us!

Lois and Eunice

How might the following circumstances have presented challenges in teaching Timothy?

- Persecution in Lystra and surrounding regions (see Acts 14, 16:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:10-11)
- Likely unbelieving (or possibly absent) father (see Acts 16:1-3, 2 Timothy 1:5)
- What do you learn from Lois and Eunice about overcoming parenting/teaching challenges?

Observe Timothy's character and faith as noted in Acts 16:1-3, Philippians 2:19-22, 2 Timothy 1:5. What does this say about Lois and Eunice themselves?

What lessons do you learn from what Paul says about Eunice and Lois' influence on Timothy from childhood? (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-17)

Home Teaching and the Church

Comment on the following statement – “Strong families build strong churches.” Do you agree? Why? How do passages like Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and 1 Timothy 3:1-13 relate to this?

How does teaching in the home give children a good foundation for serving the body of Christ in the future? (2 Timothy 1:5-7, Philippians 2:19-23)

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Lesson 7 – The Gift of Exhortation | Barnabas

Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement

In the following instances, describe **who** and **how** you see Barnabas encouraging –

- *Acts 4:36-37*

- *Acts 9:26-28*

- *Acts 11:21-26*

- *Acts 14:21-22*

- *Acts 15:36-39 (for background see Acts 13:13, Colossians 4:10)*

What character traits do you see present in Barnabas that made him well-suited to encourage?

Encouraging in the Church

Why are encouragers / exhorters needed in the local church today? List specific ways you see this gift being useful, in evangelism as well as in edification. (consider passages such as 1 Thess. 4:18, 5:11,14, 2 Tim. 4:2, Heb. 3:13, 10:24-25)

How can you use your present abilities to encourage? What qualities can you develop in order to encourage more?

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Lesson 8 – The Gift of Giving | Various

Generous Givers

For each example below, note who is giving, to whom, and why.

- *Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37*
- *Acts 11:27-30*
- *Philippians 4:10-18*
- *2 Corinthians 8:1-5*

What do you learn from these various instances of generosity?

Giving in the Body of Christ

Respond to the following statement: “I can only give if I’m wealthy or have an abundance.” Is this a proper way to approach our giving? (Luke 21:1-4, 2 Cor. 8:1-5)

How do you balance your answer above with the biblical principle that we should give in proportion to what we have, not to what we don’t? (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 8:12, Luke 12:48, 1 Tim. 6:17-19) Does everyone in the body have an equal ability or responsibility to give?

What does it mean to give “with liberality”? (Rom. 12:8) Without a percentage or objective standard to measure this, how do we determine for ourselves if we’re giving generously?

While “giving” is most easily applied to our money, how do the same principles you see in this lesson apply to your time, energy, and other resources? What can you give more of?

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Lesson 9 – The Gift of Leadership | Peter

Peter, the Shepherd

Peter's development as a leader was a long and difficult process. How did these following instances or conversations prepare him to serve as a local shepherd?

- *Matthew 16:13-23*

- *Luke 22:31-34, 54-62 (note especially v. 32)*

- *John 21:15-19*

Given his past, Peter may be the man we least expected to be an elder. How does this help us understand the phrase "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:6,7) and encourage future leaders?

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. What does Peter tell his fellow shepherds about their role, work, and motivation? What dangers should they avoid? What is their focus?

Shepherds Over the Flock

Where does leading God's church begin? (1 Tim. 3:4-5) How does a man's family become a testament to his spiritual leadership and ability to oversee God's family?

What does a church lack without shepherds? (Titus 1:5) List some ways a Christ-like eldership is a blessing to a church. (Ezekiel 34, John 10:1-18, Acts 20:17-35)

What does it mean for leaders to lead "with diligence?" (Romans 12:8, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1 Tim. 5:17, 2 Tim. 2:15, Heb. 13:17)

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Lesson 10 – The Gift of Mercy | Dorcas and Onesiphorus

Dorcas, the Provider

From Acts 9:36-39, describe how Dorcas showed mercy in a tangible, practical way.

What aspects of her service stand out to you?

Onesiphorus, the Refresher

From 2 Timothy 1:16-18, describe how Onesiphorus showed mercy in a tangible, practical way.

What aspects of his service stand out to you?

What did Paul pray the Lord would do for Onesiphorus in return for his mercy? (see Matt. 5:7)

Showing Mercy in the Body of Christ

What personality traits did Dorcas and Onesiphorus exhibit that lend themselves to showing mercy? Do you have a similar personality? How can you develop these as character traits?

Why do you think Paul specifically instructed those who show mercy to do so “with cheerfulness”? (Rom. 12:8, compare 2 Cor. 9:7)

Paul said Onesiphorus “refreshed” him. In what kinds of situations can we refresh one another today? (Rom. 15:32, 1 Cor. 16:17-18, 2 Cor. 7:13, Philemon 7,20)

In what other situations can one show mercy to help strengthen the body of Christ? (2 Cor. 1:3-4, Jude 22-23, Matt. 25:31-46) Are you aware of any “pressing needs” that can be met with mercy? (Tit. 3:14)

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Lesson 11 – The Gift of Evangelism | Timothy

Timothy, an Evangelist

What does the word “evangelist” mean? What does this tell you about his work? (Acts 21:8, Eph. 4:11, 2 Tim. 4:5)

What is involved in the work of an evangelist in the following passages?

- *1 Timothy 1:3-4*
- *1 Timothy 3:1-15 (note Titus 1:5)*
- *1 Timothy 4:13*
- *2 Timothy 2:2*
- *2 Timothy 4:1-5*

Evangelists in the Body of Christ

Did God designate evangelists to do all the work of evangelism on the church’s behalf? What is his work in relation to evangelism and other members of the body? (Eph. 4:11-16, 2 Tim. 2:2)

What is the difference between the role of pastors/shepherds and evangelists? (Eph. 4:11, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4) How can overlooking these differences be damaging to a church?

What are the dangers of elevating evangelists over one another or over equally valuable roles filled by others in the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 1:10-17, 3:1-9)

What temptations or pitfalls must an evangelist constantly guard against? (Phil. 1:15-17, 1 Tim. 6:6-11, 2 Tim. 1:8, 2:23-26, Titus 2:7-8)

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Lesson 12 – Evangelism Roles | Various

Evangelism – Every Member Working

What is every Christian's mission regarding evangelism – regardless of his or her unique part in the body?

- *Matthew 28:18-20*
- *Acts 8:1-4*

Evangelism – The Body Working Together

Chuck Anderson and John Furness suggest there are three basic roles in evangelism: Bringers, Teachers, and Keepers. Every member is equipped to evangelize in at least one of these ways.¹

Bringers invite people to make initial contact Jesus. How do these examples illustrate this?

- *Andrew and Philip – John 1:40-46*
- *Levi – Luke 5:27-32*

Teachers instruct the lost about salvation and the gospel. How do these examples show this?

- *Philip – Acts 8:26-40*
- *Paul – Acts 17:1-4*

Keepers build up new disciples to help them grow. How do you see this in action below?

- *Barnabas – Acts 11:19-24*
- *Timothy – 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10*

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these three roles. How do they complement each other to help the body grow? (Matt. 28:18-20, John 4:34-38, 1 Cor. 3:6-10)

In which of the three roles above do you think you can best serve? How will you implement this?

¹ *Bring, Teach, Keep: Illuminating the Biblical Model for Evangelism* (2013)

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Lesson 13 – Review and Summary

You Are a Part of Christ's Body

We began Lesson 1 with three passages – Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, and Ephesians 4:11-16. Please read these again with fresh eyes. How has this class helped you see the design for Jesus' body more clearly?

Re-consider our Objectives. How has this class helped you –

- *Appreciate the variety of gifts in the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 12:12)*
- *Identify ways to serve with unique abilities, opportunities, and personalities? (Rom. 12:6)*
- *Glorify God by growing in service to Him and others? (1 Pet. 4:11)*

Of the gifts and people we have studied this quarter, to which do you relate the most? Has this helped you better understand where you fit in? Do you have more confidence of where and how you can serve? Explain.

The Greatest Gift

There is a common theme in the contexts of each of the passages in the first question (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12-13, Eph. 4) – can you identify it? (hint: it starts with the letter “L”)

Now that you have identified your God-given gift(s), it is time for action. What principles do you see in the following verses that help guide us in exercising our unique gifts?

- *Romans 12:9-21*
- *1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8a*

How will you implement what you have learned this quarter?