

② Missional Community Life

INTRODUCTION | The Body of Christ

None of us can live lives completely independent from one another. We are bound to seek help, and we can also support others with the gifts we have. In order for us to experience a fellowship with one another, God has created the gospel community, which is also called the body of Christ. In this study, we would like to focus on the theme of unity and diversity of our community, the body of Christ. Let us learn from the Bible what it means to grow in the gospel, diversified in a variety of works, and unite in the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE | Ephesians 4:1-16 (ESV)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." ⁹ (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

QUESTIONS |

1. (v.1-6) What is the bond that brings unity in a human relationship and community? We often experience relationship difficulties in daily life, why is so hard to maintain unity and peace? How can unity be restored?
2. As long as there is Christ, we can openly acknowledge the reality of sin within the community; thus, we can learn to accept one another, forgive another, respect one another, and support one another. In order to bring about unity and peace, where can we begin? (Ref. Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
3. (v.7-13) There is a diversity in the body of Christ. Let us share the gifts and special characteristics you have noticed about people around you lately. Also, let us share what our respective gifts are in the group. (Ref. Romans 12:6-8)

4. What are the roles of pastors, missionaries, and church staff? What is expected from the rest of the Christians?

5. (v.14-16) This passage teaches about the growth of the community as well as individual believers. What does it say about it? In what area have you grown this past few years? (There is no need to compare yourself with others.) In what area would you like to grow?

6. The Bible emphasizes the importance of being part of the community in order to grow as a Christian. What are some of the important points in Christian growth?

Reading (Reference)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Life Together* (p.27)

Every human wish dream that is injected into Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. ...God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious.

Romans 12:6-8

⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

UPCOMING EVENTS |

Lunch Time Meeting: Akasaka (16th), Kasumigaseki (17th), Otemachi (18th & 25th), Marunouchi (24th)
Bento Project Picnic (20th)
GraceCity Gospel (9/22)

*September is a community group month. Please take this opportunity to join a group.

*Share the Bread:

- We take offerings for Bento Project until Sept. 21st
- Volunteers needed
- Picnic@ Koukyo Gaien on Sept. 21st (Sat)