



I. **Ice breaker:** What have been some of your good team experiences? How did the experience of being part of a team impact you?

II. **Read today's scripture** out loud, slowly, either in unison or using a designated reader and move into scripture quiet reflection. (3 minutes)

III. **Scripture quiet reflection:** (5-10 minutes)

<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup>There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup>There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup>Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1Corinthians 12:4-7)

<sup>12</sup>Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>18</sup>But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup>If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many parts, but one body. (1Corinthians 12:12, 18-20)

<sup>11</sup>So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

This is a time to personally reflect on this week's scripture. Have a paper and pen available.

**1. Read.** Read through the passage silently.

**2. Reflect.** Notice any words or phrases that particularly draw your attention and stand out to you.

How do these words/phrases speak directly to you and your present situation? Write your insights.

**3. Respond.** As God has spoken to you in the Scripture, respond back to God in prayer. What do you want to say to God? What else does God want to say to you?

III. **Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion. (20-30 minutes)**

A. As you reflectively engaged the Scriptures, what stood out to you from these passages?

B. Have you witnessed or been a part of a successful team? Using the following quotes as context, discuss what makes a team successful.

- "If you could get all of the people in an organization rowing in the same direction, you could dominate any industry, in any market, against any competition, at any time." (Patrick Lencioni, *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*)
- "Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team-work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." Vince Lombardi
- "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." Phil Jackson NBA coach



- C. In the Scriptures, the church is described by the apostle Paul as a human body. The use of the metaphor to describe the church helps us to see the importance of teamwork together to accomplish the work of God's Kingdom here on earth.

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. (1Cor 12:12, 18-20)

- Using the physical body metaphor to describe the church, how do these verses emphasize the significance of each person contributing to the health and function of the church carrying out the mission of God's Kingdom?
- Whether we are a foot or a hand, how should each member of the body view the other parts?
- *When one part of the body is healthy the whole body is healthy...If one part of the body suffers or is in pain... the whole body suffers.* Compare and discuss the health of the physical body to the health of the church. How is this statement portrayed in the body of Christ?

- D. Referring to verses 4-7 in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul emphasizes two main ideas of different yet same. He points out three times in relation to different gifts, services, and activities. Same is used to identify each divine Person who distributes the gifts: the same Spirit, same Lord, same God. The manifestations of the Spirit are given to each follower of Christ and given for the common good.

- Discuss what Paul means by the phrase "common good".
- Discuss why you think Paul emphasizes between different, but same.
- Based on what criteria does the Spirit distribute these gifts to the church?

- E. Drew shared five reasons we should use our gifts and talents in the church.

1. The exercise of our gifts is an act of worship
  2. Unity in diversity of gifts points to the very nature of God as evidence in the Trinity
  3. It's an inspiration and invitation for those who don't know God
  4. For the common good
  5. To build up the body of Christ to spiritual maturity
- In John 17:23, Jesus prayed for unity among his followers. *May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.* Discuss the effects of how each using their gifts in unity can demonstrate the love of God to those who aren't a part of the body of Christ. Share an example of how you have seen that the unity in the body has borne testimony to Christ.
  - Read the verses again in Ephesians 4. Paul says we use our gifts for the edification of the church "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith..." The process of maturation is called discipleship.
    - In what practical ways do our gifts help others mature in the faith? Think of your own spiritual gifts – how do your gifts either directly or indirectly support the process of discipleship? Share practical examples.
    - What are the ramifications of the discipleship process if some sit on the sidelines not exercising their gifts for the edification of the church?



F. “Diversity, not uniformity, is not just a nice idea, but it’s essential for the church.” Drew shared the analogy of an orchestra: how “each instrument is different but together the depth they create is magnified exponentially as each additional instrument plays its own part with its own unique contribution. If each one played its own song, it would be chaos (DA).” Placing this emphasis on the body of Christ means:

- We must have greater acceptance of the diversity of gifts (and people/culture) within the church
- We must not focus on one specific gift as greater than others (or the person who holds that gift)
- Resist viewing others as less important which leads to disunity
- If you have received Christ, YOU have been given spiritual gifts as a unique contribution only YOU can make to the body of Christ
  - Think about these 4 statements. Which of these is more difficult for you to accept?
  - Think of a time when you served on a ministry team with diverse gifts. In what ways did the team struggle? How did they overcome? In what ways did they work towards the common good in unity?
  - How can a team/church work together towards unity to value various gifts/culture to overcome conflict and power struggles?
  - Discuss Jesus’ response to James and John when they asked about who would be greater in the Kingdom (Luke 22:24-27).

G. In his analogy, Paul identifies Christ as the Head – Jesus is the Head of the Church.

<sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

<sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:21-23

We are called into a relationship with Christ and through Him, we become a part of His eternal intercultural Church (the church is the people, not a building) with the expressed purpose of building the Kingdom of God.

We need one another. Proverbs 27 says...

<sup>17</sup> **As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17**

We need to be with people who express their gifts differently than we do ....it is how we grow (DA).

H. **REFLECTION:** What gift(s) has the Spirit given to you? Are you exercising your gifts within the church to promote unity? Do you need to confess where you may be causing disunity? Where might God be calling you to use your gift(s) to further edify His church towards spiritual maturity? Do you welcome and value the diversity of gifts and cultures? Is God asking you to re-engage after a long season of disengagement?

**PRAY:** Take a minute or two to quietly reflect and listen to the Spirit. Then pray for one another.