

Encourage and strengthen each other by what you do

[PAUL, TO THE BELIEVERS IN COLOSSE:] *I want you to know what a struggle I am going through for you, for God's people at Laodicea, and for all of those followers who have never met me.* ²*I do it to encourage them.* Then as their hearts are joined together in love, they will be wonderfully blessed with complete understanding. And they will truly know Christ. [COLOSSIANS 2:1-2 CEV](#)

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] We are speaking in Christ before God, and *everything we do, dear friends, is to build you up.* [2 CORINTHIANS 12:19B](#)

Help Each Other

Be concerned for and compassionate towards each other

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH BODY:] Instead, God has blended together the body, giving greater honor to the lesser member, ²⁵so that there may be no division in the body, but the members may *have mutual concern for one another.* [1 CORINTHIANS 12:24B-25](#)

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and loved, *clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* [COLOSSIANS 3:12 ISV](#)

Consequently, help each other

Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [GALATIANS 6:2](#)

God is always fair. He will remember *how you helped his people in the past and how you are still helping them.* You belong to God, and he won't forget the love you have shown his people. [HEBREWS 6:10 CEV](#)

Share what you have with those in need

Share what you have with God's people who are in need. Be hospitable. [ROMANS 12:13 GW](#)

All who believed were together and *held everything in common,* ⁴⁵*and they began selling their property and possessions and distributing the proceeds to everyone, as anyone had need.* [ACTS 2:44-45](#)

26. Being One Body

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I. General

The New Testament deals extensively with how we should relate to other Christians and with issues vital for the life of the church. Amongst the most prominent themes are the need for unity and love. Fellowship is another important concept that we need to grasp, with it being involved in a number of aspects of church life.

The Church as One Body

Church members form one body – the body of Christ

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] *A person's body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Though there are many parts to a body, all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that also. ...*²⁷*Together you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that body.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12, 27 NCV™

The term “the body of Christ” figuratively depicts the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his people. Moreover, it points to the unity Christ’s people have together in their relationship with him. While the worldwide church is the whole “body of Christ”, each local church is a form of “the body of Christ”. And in each case the many members together make one body.

Being one body, church members meet together

[PAUL:] Also, greet for me *the church that meets at their house.*

ROMANS 16:5A NCV™

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.* HEBREWS 10:25 GNT

Church members function together as one church body

The men who were sent by the church went through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling how the Gentiles had turned to God. This news made the Lord’s followers very happy. ⁴*When the men arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, including the apostles and the leaders.* ACTS 15:3–4A CEV

can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. PHILIPPIANS 1:9–11

Ask God to help and take care of them

[SOLOMON, TO GOD:] *May you be attentive to your servant’s and your people Israel’s requests for help and may you respond to all their prayers to you.* 1 KINGS 8:52

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Protect those who love you; because of you they are truly happy.* PSALMS 5:11B GNT

Encourage Each Other

Encourage each other

Instead, *let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.* HEBREWS 10:25B GNT

Encourage and strengthen each other by what you say

He [Hezekiah] encouraged them, saying, ⁷“Be strong and brave! Don’t be afraid and don’t panic because of the king of Assyria and this huge army that is with him! We have with us one who is stronger than those who are with him. ⁸He has with him mere human strength, but the LORD our God is with us to help us and fight our battles!” The army was encouraged by the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.

2 CHRONICLES 32:6B–8

When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you. EPHESIANS 4:29 NCV™

Encourage others to remain true to the Lord

When he [Barnabas] arrived, he rejoiced to see what the grace of God had done, and with a hearty determination *he continuously encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord.* ACTS 11:23 ISV

II. Caring for the Body

The care that church members ought to show each other should be one of the defining characteristics of every church, evidencing Christian love. This care should include both spiritual and practical care, with the former largely involving prayer and encouragement.

Pray for Each Other (I): General

Pray constantly for each other

Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.

EPHESIANS 6:18 CEV

Particularly pray for those facing persecution . . .

[PAUL:] Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that *this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers* and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. PHILIPPIANS 1:18B–19

Paul speaks of the Philippians' prayers for him while he was imprisoned because of his work for God's kingdom (cf. v. 17).

. . . and pray for those spreading the gospel

[PAUL:] Finally, our brothers and sisters, *pray for us, that the Lord's message may continue to spread rapidly and be received with honor*, just as it was among you. 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 GNT

Pray for Each Other (II): What to Ask

Ask that other believers will live as God wants

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong.* 2 CORINTHIANS 13:7A NCV™

Pray for their spiritual growth and perfection

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight* ¹⁰*so that you*

This passage includes segments which illustrate churches functioning as one body – i.e. as a unit or cohesive community. The concept represented by the term “church” involves believers meeting together and functioning as a community or one spiritual body. As such, they worship God together and cohesively further the cause of their head, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they live in relationship with each other, in which they minister to each other.

Be in Unison

Be united as one

The group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but everything was held in common. ACTS 4:32

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to agree together, to end your divisions, and to be united by the same mind and purpose.* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10

In the last clause, Paul urges his readers to be united by having the same Christ-centered thinking and objective/s.

Be at peace with each other

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN ROME:] Therefore, *let's keep on pursuing those things that bring peace* and that lead to building one another up. ROMANS 14:19 ISV

Submit to one another

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS:] *Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.* EPHESIANS 5:21 GNT

Avoid foolish arguments and quarreling

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] *Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they grow into quarrels.* ²⁴*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel* but must be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and patient. 2 TIMOTHY 2:23–24 NCV™

Be in Fellowship

The concept of “fellowship” involves sharing and participating in a partnership concerning a mutual interest or purpose, which for believers is their common faith and life in Christ. This is shown in the Greek word translated as “fellowship” (“koinonia”) which emphasizes participation. Believers participate in Christ and church activities, and in each other’s lives.

Have fellowship together – and with the Father and Jesus Christ

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] What we have seen and heard we announce to you too, so *that you may have fellowship with us (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ)*. 1 JOHN 1:3

This shows that the fellowship believers have together is not only based on their mutual relationship in Jesus Christ, but is also a fellowship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Participate together in church activities

They [the disciples] gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers. ACTS 1:14 GNT

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] I urge you ¹⁶also to submit to people like this, and to *everyone who cooperates in the work and labors hard*. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:15B–16

Church members should participate together in God’s work, cooperating with each other.

Share together in the sufferings that come because of Christ

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] *So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord or be ashamed of me, his prisoner. Instead, by God’s power, join me in suffering for the sake of the Good News.* 2 TIMOTHY 1:8 GW

Share in each other’s joy and troubles

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ROMANS 12:15

Fellow believers may well be primarily in view here.

Love Each Other

See also: 31. Love, p. 271

Love each other as Christ loved us, even laying down his life

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] My commandment is this – to *love one another just as I have loved you*. ¹³*No one has greater love than this – that one lays down his life for his friends.* JOHN 15:12–13

Jesus disciples were to love each other as he had loved them, a love which he would show to be unsurpassed by laying down his life for them.

Loving other Christians is indicative of being of Christ and God

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] “I give you a new commandment – to love one another. *Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.* ³⁵*Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples – if you have love for one another.*” JOHN 13:34–35

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] Beloved, *let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.* ... ¹²*No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.* ... ¹⁶*God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* 1 JOHN 4:7, 12, 16B ESV

Love is the essence of God’s nature – “God is love” (v. 16; cf. v. 8). Everyone who loves exhibits God’s nature, demonstrating that they have been “born of God” (v. 7b). In addition, loving one another shows that we know God (v. 7), and that we live in God and he lives in us (vv. 12, 16b).

Love is expressed with actions

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *Suppose someone has enough to live and sees a brother or sister in need, but does not help. Then God’s love is not living in that person.* ¹⁸*My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring.* 1 JOHN 3:17–18 NCV™