

One Body, Many Parts

**Belonging and
Serving Christ in
Others**



fhlm.org

Faith, Hope and Love Ministries



Faith, Hope, and Love Ministries

About Us

At FHLM, we are dedicated to nurturing faith, fostering hope, and spreading love. We provide both spiritual and practical guidance to Christians, students, and Christian leaders. We are not a church, and we do not offer financial support.

We are a small ministry with a simple hope: to put warm, thoughtful, Bible-centred resources into the hands of anyone who wants to grow closer to Jesus — whether you are gathering a group around a kitchen table or sitting quietly with a cup of tea and an open Bible. Everything we make is offered freely, in the hope that it will be a blessing and passed on.

Core Values

Our mission is grounded in the values of unconditional love and unity. We prioritise inclusion and diversity over dogmatism and division, reaching out to people right where they are, and trying our best to follow the example of Jesus.

Contents

This guide is organised into three main sections:

- Leaders Guide
- Bible Study Notes
- Worksheet

Note

This guide is formatted for double-sided printing, to save paper and make for a nicer reading experience.

Stay in Touch

We would love to keep walking alongside you. Explore our growing library of Bible study and reflection guides, and do get in touch to let us know how you are getting on.

License

© 2026 by Faith, Hope and Love Ministries (Ashley R. Deutschmann) is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Leader's Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Introduction for Leaders and Solo Readers

Dear Friends,

Welcome to “One Body, Many Parts,” from all of us at Faith, Hope, and Love Ministries.

Whether you are leading a group or making this journey on your own, we are so glad you are here. Over the coming ten sessions we will sit with four passages that, taken together, say something Scripture never tires of saying: that we belong to one another, and that God is found, quite specifically, among the overlooked.

We begin in 1 Corinthians 12, with Paul's picture of a body made of many members, none of them spare parts. From there we turn to Galatians 3:28, where Paul insists that whatever divides us in the world's eyes no longer has the last word in Christ. Isaiah 58 asks what kind of “fast” God is actually looking for, and Matthew 25 closes the study with Jesus's own account of how the story ends — not with grand pronouncements, but with a cup of water, a coat, a visit.

You will find this guide easy to make your own. Rearrange the sessions, trim a discussion that isn't landing, linger longer on one that is — you know your group, and we trust you with it. The material is a starting point, not a script. You will also find a suggested prayer at the beginning and end of each session; pray them as they stand, reword them, or set them aside and pray from your own heart.

We have laid out the Bible Study sessions to fit on a single, double-sided page — notes and Scripture on one side, discussion and reflection questions on the other — so they are easy to photocopy and hand round.

You can find out more about us, or say hello, at <https://fhlm.org>, or on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

A word on copyright: everything we produce is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. In plain terms, you are welcome to share and adapt it, as long as you credit us, keep it non-commercial, and pass on any changes under the same terms.

A word on Scripture: the verses in this guide are taken from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), used with kind permission. That said, please read along in whichever translation you love best — we are not endorsing any single one. What matters most to us is that you read for understanding, and meet the Lord in His Word.

Our prayer is that this study will do more than fill a notebook. May you come to see your own life as one part of something far larger than yourself — and may you come to see, in the hungry and the thirsty and the stranger, a face you had not thought to look for.

© 2026 Faith, Hope and Love Ministries (<https://fhlm.org>)

All rights reserved. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. You are free to share and adapt this material, but you must give appropriate credit, indicate if changes were made, and use it for non-commercial purposes only. Any derivative works must be shared under the same license.

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

In the love of Christ,

Faith, Hope and Love Ministries

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 1: One Body, Many Parts

Opening Prayer:

"Father, You have made us one body, though we are many members. As we begin this study together, teach us to see ourselves — and each other — the way You see us: joined together, each one placed on purpose. Amen."

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (BSB) "The body is a unit, though it is composed of many parts. And although its parts are many, they all form one body. So it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink. For the body does not consist of one part, but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has arranged the members of the body, every one of them, according to His design. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body."

Supplementary Scripture:

- 1 Corinthians 12:27 (BSB) "Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it."
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (BSB) "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. There are different ways of working, but the same God works all things in all people."

Discussion Points:

1. One Body, Many Members:

- Paul says the body is a unit even though it is made of many different parts. Where in your own life have you seen real difference and real unity working well together?
- What might it look like, in practice, for a church or a small group to actually be "one body" when its people are so different from one another?

2. No One Part Is the Whole:

- Paul imagines the foot saying, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body." Have you ever quietly felt that way about your own place somewhere — as though you didn't quite fit or qualify?
- Why do you think God has "arranged the members of the body, every one of them, according to His design," rather than leaving it to chance, or to our own preferences?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope everyone will leave with a settled sense that they belong — placed by God, not because they earned it. May this become the lens for every session still to come: we are joined to one another, whether we feel it yet or not.

Closing Prayer:

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

"Lord Jesus, thank You for making us part of a body far bigger than ourselves. Where we have felt spare or unnecessary, remind us that You placed us here on purpose. And where we have overlooked others, open our eyes to see them as You do. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 2: No Part Can Say “I Don't Need You”

Opening Prayer:

“Gracious Father, You have joined us to people we would never have chosen for ourselves, and called it good. Teach us this week to need one another honestly, and to honour the parts of Your body we are tempted to overlook. Amen.”

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:21-26 (BSB) “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you.’ Nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you.’ On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts we consider less honorable, we treat with greater honor. And our unpresentable parts are treated with special modesty, whereas our presentable parts have no such need. But God has composed the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its members should have mutual concern for one another. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

Supplementary Scripture:

- 1 Corinthians 12:13 (BSB) “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:14 (BSB) “For the body does not consist of one part, but of many.”

Discussion Points:

1. Indispensable, Not Optional:

- “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you.’” What tends to make us act as though we don't actually need certain people, even when Scripture insists we do?
- Who, in your own life or church, do you find it easiest to overlook — and what would it cost you to stop?

2. Greater Honour to the Lesser Parts:

- Paul says the parts we consider less honourable are the very ones we should treat with greater honour. What would that actually look like this week, in a specific relationship?
- How does “if one part suffers, every part suffers with it” challenge the way we usually respond — or fail to respond — to someone else's hardship?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope people will come away convinced, not just in theory but in practice, that no one in the body is optional — and that the parts most easily overlooked are precisely the ones God calls us to honour most deliberately. A community that suffers and rejoices together, rather than at a comfortable distance, is what we hope this session begins to build.

Closing Prayer:

“Lord, forgive us for the times we have said, in word or in action, ‘I do not need you.’ Teach us to honour what we are tempted to overlook, and to carry one another's sorrows and joys as though they were our own. Amen.”

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 3: Different Gifts, One Spirit

Opening Prayer:

"Holy Spirit, You give good gifts, and You give them differently to each of us. Help us this week to see our own gifts clearly, without pride and without false modesty, and to use them for the good of everyone around us. Amen."

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (BSB) "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. There are different ways of working, but the same God works all things in all people. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in various tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who apportions them to each one as He determines."

Supplementary Scripture:

- 1 Corinthians 12:28 (BSB) "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those with gifts of healing, helping, administration, and various tongues."
- 1 Corinthians 12:31 (BSB) "But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way."

Discussion Points:

1. Same Spirit, Different Gifts:

- Paul's list of gifts is wide and varied, and yet he insists it is the same Spirit at work in every one of them. What gift or ability has God given you that you sometimes undervalue, or hesitate to name as a gift at all?
- Why do you think God chose to give different gifts to different people, rather than the same gift to everyone?

2. For the Common Good:

- "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the common good." How does that phrase change the way you think about your own gifts and abilities?
- What tends to happen — in a church, a family, or a workplace — when people start using their gifts to be noticed, rather than for the common good?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope everyone will leave able to name at least one gift God has genuinely given them, and freed from comparing that gift to anyone else's. Our aim is a group that has stopped ranking its members by gift, and started asking, quite simply, how each person's gift might serve the whole.

Closing Prayer:

"Father, thank You for the gifts You have given each one of us, and for the gifts You have given the people around us. Keep us from envy and from pride alike, and teach us to use what we have been given for the good of everyone. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 4: All One in Christ Jesus

Opening Prayer:

"Lord Jesus, You have clothed us with Yourself, and in You every wall the world builds comes down. Teach us this week to see one another the way You see us — as one, in Christ. Amen."

Key Scripture:

Galatians 3:26-28 (BSB) "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Supplementary Scripture:

- Galatians 3:24 (BSB) "So the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."
- Galatians 3:29 (BSB) "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

Discussion Points:

1. Clothed with Christ:

- Paul says that those baptised into Christ have "clothed yourselves with Christ." What do you think it means to wear someone else's identity as your own?
- How is your identity in Christ different from every other way you might be tempted to define yourself — by achievement, background, or reputation?

2. Neither... Nor...:

- Paul names three pairs that divided his own world sharply: Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. What are some of the lines people draw between one another in our own world today?
- What does it mean, in practice, that these differences remain real — Paul doesn't pretend they vanish — and yet no longer determine anyone's standing before God?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope this session leaves people with a settled confidence that their standing before God was never in question because of who they are, and a renewed care for anyone they had quietly ranked as more or less "one of us." Galatians 3:28 is not a slogan; we hope it becomes something closer to an instinct.

Closing Prayer:

"Father, thank You that in Christ the old lines no longer decide anyone's worth. Where we have ranked people, forgive us. Where we have felt ranked ourselves, remind us we are Yours. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 5: The Fast That God Chooses

Opening Prayer:

"Lord, You see past our religious performance and into our hearts. Show us this week what kind of fast — what kind of faith — You are actually looking for. Amen."

Key Scripture:

Isaiah 58:6-7 (BSB) "Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke? Isn't it to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Supplementary Scripture:

- Isaiah 58:3-4 (BSB) "'Why have we fasted, and You have not seen? Why have we humbled ourselves, and You have not noticed?' Behold, on the day of your fast, you do as you please, and you oppress all your workers. You fast with contention and strife to strike viciously with your fist. You cannot fast as you do today and have your voice be heard on high."
- Isaiah 58:5 (BSB) "Is this the fast I have chosen: a day for a man to deny himself, to bow his head like a reed, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the LORD?"

Discussion Points:

1. Empty Religion:

- The people in Isaiah's day fasted faithfully and then asked God why He hadn't noticed. What is the difference between religious activity and something that genuinely reaches God?
- Have you ever gone through the motions of faith — the right words, the right habits — while your heart, or your treatment of the people around you, was somewhere else entirely?

2. The Fast God Actually Wants:

- Isaiah lists specific, practical actions: loosing chains, sharing bread, bringing the homeless in, clothing the naked, not turning away from your own flesh and blood. Which of these feels most within your reach this week?
- Which of them feels hardest — and why do you think that particular one is difficult for you?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope people will leave this session less interested in impressive religious performance and more interested in the plain, practical actions Isaiah names — and that at least one of those actions will find its way into someone's week before the group meets again.

Closing Prayer:

"Father, forgive us the fasts that cost us nothing. Show us the chains You want loosed, the bread You want shared, and give us the courage to do it, not for show, but because You have asked. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 6: Repairer of the Breach

Opening Prayer:

"God of restoration, You promise light and healing and a well-watered garden to those who live the fast You have chosen. Grow that kind of life in us, and make us repairers rather than merely spectators. Amen."

Key Scripture:

Isaiah 58:11-12 (BSB) "The LORD will always guide you; He will satisfy you in a sun-scorched land and strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will restore the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling."

Supplementary Scripture:

- Isaiah 58:8 (BSB) "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will come quickly. Your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard."
- Isaiah 58:9-10 (BSB) "Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry out, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger and malicious talk, and if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light will go forth in the darkness, and your night will be like noonday."

Discussion Points:

1. The Promise That Follows:

- After describing the fast He actually wants, God promises light breaking forth, quick healing, guidance, and a well-watered garden. Why do you think these blessings follow that kind of obedience rather than religious performance?
- Which of these promises — light, healing, guidance, a well-watered garden — speaks most to where you find yourself just now?

2. Repairer of the Breach:

- Being called "Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling" is a remarkable title for ordinary people to be given. What "breaches" — broken places, old ruins, relationships or situations in need of rebuilding — do you see around you?
- What is one small, specific way you could take up that title this week, even in a small corner of your own life?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope this session leaves people encouraged rather than merely instructed — aware that the fast God chooses is followed by real promises, and willing to see themselves as repairers of at least one small breach they have the power to address.

Closing Prayer:

"Lord, make us repairers of the breach in whatever corner You have placed us. Guide us continually, and let our lives be like a well-watered garden — fed by You, and giving shade to others. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 7: Whatever You Did for One of the Least of These

Opening Prayer:

"Lord Jesus, You have told us plainly where You are found — hungry, thirsty, a stranger, in need. Open our eyes this week to see You there, and give us the readiness to act. Amen."

Key Scripture:

Matthew 25:34-36 (BSB) "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.'"

Supplementary Scripture:

- Matthew 25:31-33 (BSB) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left."

Discussion Points:

1. The King Who Notices:

- Jesus pictures Himself sorting the nations the way a shepherd sorts sheep from goats. What does it tell us that this is how He describes the end of the story — not in grand abstractions, but in hunger, thirst, and shelter?
- How does it change the way you picture the "end of all things" to know it will turn, in part, on such ordinary kindnesses?

2. Six Ordinary Kindnesses:

- Food, drink, welcome, clothing, care for the sick, a visit to the prisoner — none of these six require wealth, power, or special training. Which one feels most within your reach this week?
- Is there someone specific — not a category, but an actual person — you could offer one of these six to before this study is over?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope people will leave struck by how ordinary these six kindnesses are, and how directly Jesus ties them to Himself — and that at least one person will have a specific face in mind by the time this session ends, rather than a general good intention.

Closing Prayer:

"Lord, thank You for telling us so plainly where to find You. Give us eyes to notice the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, and the readiness to act rather than merely to feel moved. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 8: “When Did We See You?”

Opening Prayer:

“Father, the righteous in this story didn’t even remember serving You — it was simply how they lived. Shape our habits, not just our intentions, until kindness becomes who we are rather than what we occasionally decide to do. Amen.”

Key Scripture:

Matthew 25:37–40 (BSB) “Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?’ And the King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’”

Supplementary Scripture:

- Matthew 25:33 (BSB) “He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.”

Discussion Points:

1. The Righteous Don't Remember:

- The sheep in Jesus’s story are genuinely surprised — they can’t recall ever serving the King at all. What do you think their surprise tells us about how this kind of love is meant to work?
- Have you ever helped someone without any sense that you were doing something noteworthy, and only realised afterwards how much it mattered? What was that like?

2. “You Did It for Me”:

- Jesus says that whatever was done for “one of the least of these” was done for Him personally. How does it change the way you see an ordinary act of kindness, to know Christ Himself is somehow present in it?
- Is there a person you find it hard to see Christ in? What might it look like to bring that particular difficulty honestly to God this week, rather than pretending it isn’t there?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope this session leaves people less focused on being seen or credited for kindness, and more interested in the kind of unselfconscious care the sheep displayed — a habit of the heart rather than a performance for anyone watching, including ourselves.

Closing Prayer:

“Lord Jesus, let our care for others become so natural that we hardly notice we are doing it. And where we struggle to see You in someone, meet us there, and change our sight. Amen.”

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 9: Whatever You Did Not Do

Opening Prayer:

"Merciful Father, this is a sobering passage, and we come to it honestly rather than defensively. Show us where we have looked away, and meet us there with both truth and grace. Amen."

Key Scripture:

Matthew 25:41-46 (BSB) "Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me.' And they too will reply, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then the King will answer, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Supplementary Scripture:

- Matthew 25:40 (BSB) "And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'"
- Matthew 25:32 (BSB) "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

Discussion Points:

1. The Other Side of the Story:

- The goats in this story are not condemned for cruelty, but for neglect — not for what they did, but for what they failed to do. Why might neglect be just as serious, in Jesus's eyes, as active wrongdoing?
- Is there a specific need you have noticed recently, and quietly stepped past? What made it easier to look away than to act?

2. Also Surprised:

- Like the sheep before them, the goats are also genuinely surprised — "when did we see You...?" What does it suggest that both groups failed to recognise Christ in the vulnerable, for good or for ill?
- This is a hard passage. What is one honest, unhurried step you could take this week — not out of fear, but in response to God's grace — towards noticing what you might otherwise miss?

Desired Outcomes:

This session is not meant to leave people afraid, but awake — genuinely more likely to notice the person in front of them. We hope any discomfort here leads people back to grace rather than away from it, and towards one specific, concrete change rather than a vague resolve to "do better."

Closing Prayer:

"Lord, You know how easily we look away. Give us grace for what we have missed, and courage for what is still in front of us. Make us people who notice, and who act. Amen."

Bible Study Leaders Guide

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 10: Sent Out as One Body

Opening Prayer:

"Father, we have sat together with Your body, Your family, and Your call to serve the vulnerable. As we close this study, send us out not as ten separate people who once discussed these things, but as one body, ready to live them. Amen."

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:27 (BSB) "Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it."

Supplementary Scripture:

- Galatians 3:28 (BSB) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- Isaiah 58:11-12 (BSB) "The LORD will always guide you; He will satisfy you in a sun-scorched land and strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will restore the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling."

Discussion Points:

1. One Body, Sent Together:

- Looking back over the whole study, what has struck you most about being "the body of Christ," each one a member of it?
- Which of the four passages we've studied — 1 Corinthians 12, Galatians 3:28, Isaiah 58, or Matthew 25 — has stayed with you most, and why?

2. Carrying It Forward:

- This study began with a body knit together and closed with a King who is found among the hungry and the stranger. What is one concrete way you — or your group — will carry this forward into ordinary life?
- Who could you invite to walk alongside you in this, so that it doesn't end when the study does?

Desired Outcomes:

We hope this final session sends everyone out with a settled sense of belonging to something larger than themselves, and at least one specific, shared commitment to carry the study's themes — unity across every dividing line, and care for the vulnerable — into the months ahead.

Closing Prayer:

"Lord, thank You for every session of this study, and for every part of Your body we have come to see more clearly. Send us out as one people, ready to serve wherever You place us, until we come home to You. Amen."

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

What would it mean to actually believe that every member of the body is necessary — and that Christ Himself is close to the ones the world walks past?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 1 – One Body, Many Parts

The church at Corinth was not, by all accounts, an easy place to belong. It was a congregation stitched together from wildly different backgrounds, and it had a habit of ranking its own members — this gift over that one, this person's standing over that person's. Into the middle of that quiet competition, Paul reaches for an image every reader in Corinth already knew from their own body: "The body is a unit, though it is composed of many parts. And although its parts are many, they all form one body. So it is with Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). Whatever else this study will say, it begins here — with the plain, almost obvious claim that unity and difference were never meant to be enemies.

Before Paul ever gets to the parts of the body, he starts with the source of them all: "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord. There are different ways of working, but the same God works all things in all people" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Notice the pattern — different, and yet the same Spirit; different, and yet the same Lord; different, and yet the same God. Our differences were never meant to be smoothed away. They were meant to be held together by something — Someone — bigger than any of them.

Then comes the picture Paul is really after: a foot, feeling out of place, muttering, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body" — and Paul's blunt reply that this "would not make it any less a part of the body" (1 Corinthians 12:15). Most of us know that voice. It says we are too quiet, too ordinary, too unlike the people who seem to matter more. Paul simply will not let the complaint stand. Feeling unnecessary and being unnecessary, it turns out, are two very different things — because "God has arranged the members of the body, every one of them, according to His design" (1 Corinthians 12:18). Design, not accident. Placement, not luck.

It is worth sitting with the alternative Paul rejects: "If they were all one part, where would the body be?" (1 Corinthians 12:19). A body of nothing but hands, however excellent, could not see or hear or walk. Our differences are not a problem the church must manage or apologise for — they are the very thing that makes it a body at all rather than a single, useless part multiplied a thousand times over.

So here is where we begin, ten sessions and four passages from now: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). Not a spare part. Not an afterthought. A member — placed, needed, and joined to everyone else God has placed and needed besides you.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

One Body, Many Parts

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. Paul says the body is a unit even though it has many different parts. Where in your own life have you seen real difference and real unity working well together?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 again slowly. Why do you think Paul is so careful to repeat “the same Spirit... the same Lord... the same God” before he ever mentions our differences?
3. What gift, quality, or way of serving has God given you that you sometimes catch yourself undervaluing?
4. Have you ever quietly felt like the foot in verse 15 — as though you didn't fit or qualify to belong somewhere? What helped, if anything did?
5. Why do you think God arranged the members of the body “according to His design” rather than leaving it to chance or to our own preferences (1 Corinthians 12:18)?
6. What might it look like, practically, for your own church or group to function more like “one body” made of genuinely different people?
7. Is there someone in your life whose gifts are very different from your own? How have their differences actually served you, even if you hadn't thought of it that way before?
8. Verse 19 asks, “If they were all one part, where would the body be?” What would be lost if everyone in your church or family were the same?
9. How does it change the way you see yourself to know you were placed, not left over — that you are, right now, “a member” of something (1 Corinthians 12:27)?
10. As you begin this study, is there a specific person you tend to think of as less necessary than yourself? Bring them to mind, and to prayer, before the next session.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 2 – No Part Can Say “I Don't Need You”

If the last session established that we belong, this one insists that we need each other — actually need, not merely tolerate. Paul puts it as bluntly as language allows: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you.’ Nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you.’” (1 Corinthians 12:21). It would be laughable for a body to talk that way, and Paul clearly means for it to sound just as laughable when we say it — in word or, more often, simply in the way we treat one another — about the people God has placed beside us.

What follows is one of the more surprising turns in the passage. “The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,” Paul writes, “and the parts we consider less honorable, we treat with greater honor” (1 Corinthians 12:22-23). This is not how most of us naturally rank people. We tend to notice the confident, the capable, the ones already receiving attention. Paul describes a body that works the other way round — where the parts we'd be tempted to hide or excuse are the very ones singled out for special care.

Why? Paul tells us plainly: “so that there should be no division in the body, but that its members should have mutual concern for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25). Division starts, more often than not, with quiet ranking — deciding, even without saying so, that some people's presence matters more than others'. God's remedy is not a lecture about fairness. It is a body that has learned, member by member, to actually need each other.

That mutual concern reaches all the way into the body's feelings, not only its actions: “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). It is worth being honest about how far that is from most of our lived experience. We are practised at sympathy from a comfortable distance; Paul describes something closer, less manageable, and considerably more costly — a shared nervous system, almost, where someone else's grief genuinely reaches us.

For all of that, this remains good news, not merely a demand. Paul had already reminded the Corinthians, a few verses earlier, that “in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and we were all given one Spirit to drink,” and that “the body does not consist of one part, but of many” (1 Corinthians 12:13-14). The needing goes both ways. You are not only called to need others; you are permitted, at last, to need them back — and to be the “weaker,” overlooked part someone else has been quietly taught to treat with greater honour.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

No Part Can Say “I Don’t Need You”

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you.’” What tends to make us act, even without saying it out loud, as though we don't really need certain people?
2. Who in your own life or church do you find it easiest to overlook — and what would it cost you to stop?
3. Paul says the parts we consider less honourable are treated with greater honour (1 Corinthians 12:23). What would that actually look like this week, with a specific person in mind?
4. How does “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26) challenge the way you usually respond to someone else's hardship?
5. Can you recall a time when someone else's joy or grief genuinely became your own, rather than something you simply heard about? What was that like?
6. Verse 13 says we were “all given one Spirit to drink.” How does sharing the same Spirit change the way two very different people are meant to relate to one another?
7. Why do you think Paul says the body has “no division” when its members have mutual concern for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25), rather than when they simply agree?
8. Have you ever been treated as the “weaker” or less honourable part, and found someone else's care there surprising? What happened?
9. What is one concrete way you could show honour this week to someone you might normally overlook?
10. As a group (or alone), is there a shared burden right now — someone's suffering or someone's joy — that you could deliberately carry together?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 3 – Different Gifts, One Spirit

Paul opens this part of his letter almost like a list-maker: “To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing... to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy... to another speaking in various tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). It reads almost like a roll call, and perhaps that is the point — each gift named individually, no two people quite the same, and yet every single one traced back to the very same source.

That source is repeated so often it is easy to skim past: “the same Spirit... the same Spirit... that one Spirit... one and the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8, 9, 11). Paul will not let the variety obscure the unity, nor let the unity flatten the variety. Both are true at once, and both matter. Our gifts differ; the Giver does not.

And that Giver has a say in the matter that we do not: “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who apportions them to each one as He determines” (1 Corinthians 12:11). Not as we choose, not as we'd prefer, not according to what looks most impressive — as He determines. That is a hard word for anyone who has ever wished for a different gift than the one they were actually given, and a freeing one too, once it settles: your gift is not an accident, and it is not a mistake to be corrected.

Paul goes on, a little further in the chapter, to widen the list beyond the spectacular: “God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, and those with gifts of healing, helping, administration, and various tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28). Helping. Administration. Sitting quietly beside the list of miracles and prophecy are the gifts of showing up, organising, and simply being useful — proof that “ordinary” gifts were never a lesser category in God's eyes, whatever they might be in ours.

Paul does not end by telling the Corinthians to be satisfied with whatever gift they happen to have and stop there. “Eagerly desire the greater gifts,” he says — and then, almost as an aside that turns out to be the whole point of the next chapter, “And now I will show you the most excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31). The gifts matter. But they were always meant to be carried by something even greater — a way of using them that we'll come to see, across the rest of this study, looks a great deal like love in action.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Different Gifts, One Spirit

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. Read the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 slowly. Which of these, if any, do you recognise in yourself or in someone close to you?
2. Why do you think Paul repeats “the same Spirit” so many times before ever naming a single gift?
3. What gift or ability has God given you that you sometimes hesitate to claim, or quietly assume doesn't really count?
4. Verse 11 says the Spirit apportions gifts to each person “as He determines.” Have you ever wrestled with wishing you had a different gift than the one you were actually given?
5. 1 Corinthians 12:28 places “helping” and “administration” alongside apostles and prophets. Why do you think practical, unglamorous gifts belong on the very same list?
6. How does knowing your gift comes from the same Spirit as everyone else's change the way you view someone whose gifts are very different from your own?
7. What tends to happen in a church, family, or workplace when people begin comparing their gifts rather than simply using them?
8. Is there a gift you see in someone else that you find yourself envying? What might it look like to be grateful for it instead?
9. Paul tells the Corinthians to “eagerly desire the greater gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31). What do you think it looks like to desire a gift for the sake of serving others, rather than for the sake of being noticed?
10. What is one specific way you could put your own gift to use this week, for someone else's good rather than your own credit?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 4 – All One in Christ Jesus

Paul has just spent several verses describing the law as something like a strict but necessary tutor: “the law became our guardian to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). A guardian has real authority, and a real job to do, but it is not meant to last forever. Once the child it was guarding has grown, and faith has come, something changes — not because the guardian was wrong to exist, but because its work is finished.

What changes is nothing less than family status. “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,” Paul writes, and then goes further still: “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:26–27). Clothing is not a small image. What you wear is what people see first; Paul says that for those in Christ, what people are actually seeing, whether they know it or not, is Christ Himself.

And then comes the verse this whole session has been building towards, one of the most quietly explosive sentences Paul ever wrote: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Paul names three of the sharpest lines his own world drew between people — lines that decided status, opportunity, even whether a person's voice counted for anything at all. He does not pretend those differences vanish. He insists, instead, that in Christ they no longer have the last word over anyone.

It would be easy to read this verse and stop at the categories Paul happened to name, as though the point were a list to be checked off. But the deeper claim is broader than any single list: whatever line the world draws to decide who matters more, that line does not run through the family of God the way it runs through everything else. “You are all one in Christ Jesus” is not a slogan to display; it is a description of what has actually already happened to anyone clothed in Him.

Paul closes the thought by pointing back to a promise far older than any of us: “if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Heirs — not by birth, not by background, not by anything we brought with us, but by belonging to Christ. Whatever else divides the people sitting in your group this week, this is what unites them: the same inheritance, given on exactly the same terms.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

All One in Christ Jesus

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. Galatians 3:24 describes the law as a “guardian” whose job was to lead us to Christ. What do you think changes once that guardian's work is finished?
2. Paul says those baptised into Christ have “clothed yourselves with Christ” (Galatians 3:27). What do you think it means to wear someone else's identity as your own?
3. How is your identity in Christ different from every other way you might be tempted to define yourself — by achievement, background, or reputation?
4. Galatians 3:28 names three pairs that divided Paul's own world sharply. What are some of the lines people draw between one another in our own world today?
5. Paul doesn't pretend these differences disappear — only that they no longer decide anyone's standing before God. What is the difference between those two claims?
6. Have you ever ranked yourself, even quietly, as more or less “one of us” in a church or group? What would it look like to let that go?
7. How does verse 29 — being “Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise” — change the way you think about your own inheritance in Christ?
8. Is there someone you find it hard to see as fully equal to yourself before God? What might Galatians 3:28 have to say to that?
9. What would it look like for your own church or group to actually live as though “you are all one in Christ Jesus,” not just believe it?
10. This week, is there one relationship where an old line — of status, background, or anything else — could be quietly set aside?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 5 – The Fast That God Chooses

Isaiah's audience was, by every outward measure, a devoted people — diligent in their religious observance, and quite sure of their own standing before God. And yet something had clearly gone wrong, because their own complaint follows almost immediately: "Why have we fasted, and You have not seen? Why have we humbled ourselves, and You have not noticed?" (Isaiah 58:3). They had kept the outward form of devotion perfectly, and could not understand why heaven seemed silent in return.

God's answer is not gentle. "Behold, on the day of your fast, you do as you please, and you oppress all your workers. You fast with contention and strife to strike viciously with your fist" (Isaiah 58:3-4). It is a startling picture — people denying themselves food with one hand and mistreating the people under their power with the other, entirely unaware of the contradiction. Fasting had become a performance rather than a posture of the heart, and God names it as such without flinching.

So He asks, almost incredulously, "Is this the fast I have chosen: a day for a man to deny himself, to bow his head like a reed, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast and a day acceptable to the LORD?" (Isaiah 58:5). The question answers itself. Self-denial that changes nothing about how we treat the people around us was never the point, however impressive it looks from the outside.

Then, at last, comes the fast God actually wants — and it turns out to have almost nothing to do with going without food, and everything to do with what we do for others: "to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6). And it does not stop there: "to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood" (Isaiah 58:7).

Notice how specific this is. Not a general goodwill towards humanity, but bread actually shared, a door actually opened, clothing actually given, and — perhaps hardest of all — a refusal to turn away from "your own flesh and blood," the person right in front of you whom it would be easiest to avoid. This is not a passage about feeling the right things. It is a passage about doing them.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

The Fast That God Chooses

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. The people in Isaiah's day fasted faithfully and then asked God why He hadn't noticed (Isaiah 58:3). What is the difference between religious activity and something that genuinely reaches God?
2. God accuses His people of fasting while oppressing their workers (Isaiah 58:3-4). Have you ever gone through the motions of faith while your treatment of someone else told a different story?
3. Why do you think self-denial alone — “a day for a man to deny himself” (Isaiah 58:5) — isn't the fast God is looking for?
4. Isaiah lists specific, practical actions in verses 6-7: loosing chains, sharing bread, bringing the homeless in, clothing the naked, not turning away from your own flesh and blood. Which of these feels most within your reach this week?
5. Which of them feels hardest for you — and why do you think that particular one is difficult?
6. What does it mean, practically, not to “turn away from your own flesh and blood” (Isaiah 58:7)? Who might that phrase point to in your own life?
7. Isaiah's picture of a false fast involves “contention and strife” (Isaiah 58:4). How can even good religious habits become a cover for a divided heart?
8. Have you ever mistaken performance — looking devoted — for actually being devoted? What helped you see the difference?
9. Is there a specific “chain” or “yoke” — a situation of real hardship — you have some ability, even a small one, to help loosen this week?
10. What is one concrete, specific action from Isaiah 58:6-7 you could take before this group meets again?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 6 – Repairer of the Breach

Isaiah does not leave his listeners with only a list of demands. Immediately after describing the fast God actually wants, he turns to promise: “Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will come quickly. Your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard” (Isaiah 58:8). It is worth noticing the order here. The light and healing are not the reason to obey; they are what follows obedience, almost as its natural shape rather than its reward.

The promises keep coming, each one more tender than the last: “Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry out, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’” (Isaiah 58:9). There is something remarkable in that — a God who had seemed silent to a people going through empty religious motions suddenly answering, quickly and personally, once their fasting turns into justice and mercy. His promise continues: “and if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light will go forth in the darkness, and your night will be like noonday” (Isaiah 58:10).

And then, the image this session takes its title from: “The LORD will always guide you; He will satisfy you in a sun-scorched land and strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11). A well-watered garden in a sun-scorched land is no small thing — it is a source of shade and fruit precisely where the surrounding ground has nothing left to give. That is the picture God holds out for a people who have learned to give themselves to the hungry and the afflicted.

But the promise Isaiah gives them is not only personal, and it does not stop with individual flourishing. “Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins; you will restore the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling” (Isaiah 58:12). What began as private obedience — a fast reshaped around mercy — ends up rebuilding something communal and long broken. God does not merely bless the individual who obeys; He makes them useful to everyone around the ruin.

“Repairer of the Breach” is a striking title to be handed to ordinary people. It suggests that some of the brokenness around us — old, familiar, long since accepted as simply how things are — is not beyond repair, and that God intends to do at least some of that repairing through people who have learned to share their bread and open their homes. The garden does not water only itself.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Repairer of the Breach

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. After describing the fast He actually wants, God promises light, healing, guidance, and a well-watered garden (Isaiah 58:8, 11). Why do you think these blessings follow that kind of obedience rather than religious performance?
2. Verse 9 promises that God will say, "Here I am," once His people's fasting turns into real mercy. What do you make of a God who seemed silent, then suddenly near?
3. Which of these promises — light, healing, guidance, a well-watered garden — speaks most to where you find yourself just now?
4. What does it mean to you that giving yourself "to the hungry and... the afflicted soul" (Isaiah 58:10) is what brings light into darkness, rather than the other way round?
5. Being called "Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling" (Isaiah 58:12) is a remarkable title for ordinary people. What "breaches" — broken places, old ruins — do you see around you?
6. How does it change your view of everyday acts of mercy to know they can rebuild something as large as "ancient ruins" and "age-old foundations" (Isaiah 58:12)?
7. Have you ever seen a small act of kindness lead, over time, to something much larger being restored — a relationship, a neighbourhood, a family?
8. What is one small, specific way you could take up the title "Repairer of the Breach" this week, even in a small corner of your own life?
9. Isaiah 58:11 promises God will "always guide you." How does trusting that guidance change the way you approach a broken or difficult situation?
10. Is there a "ruin" — old and familiar — that your group could commit, together, to help rebuild in some small way?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 7 – Whatever You Did for One of the Least of These

Jesus ends His teaching with a scene of judgment unlike almost anything else in the Gospels: “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:31-32). It is cosmic in scale — every nation, every person, gathered before a King on a throne — and yet, as the scene unfolds, it turns out to hinge on things almost embarrassingly small.

“He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left” (Matthew 25:33), and then the King speaks to those on His right: “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). This is not a kingdom hastily assembled at the last minute. It was prepared “from the foundation of the world” — meaning the King’s welcome to the sheep was never a surprise decision, but always the plan.

And then the reason for that welcome, laid out with striking plainness: “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me” (Matthew 25:35-36). Six kindnesses. No theology exams, no doctrinal statements, no record of religious achievement — just food, drink, welcome, clothing, care, and a visit.

It is worth sitting with how ordinary each of these six actually is. None of them require wealth, influence, or any special training. A meal. A drink. An open door. A coat. Attention paid to someone unwell. Time spent with someone locked away and easily forgotten. The King who sits on the glorious throne, judging every nation, measures His welcome by things nearly anyone, anywhere, could actually do.

This is how Jesus chooses to describe the end of the story — not with grand pronouncements about who believed the right things in the abstract, but with a scene almost domestic in its detail: hunger noticed, thirst answered, a stranger let in. Whatever else this study has said about the body of Christ and the fast God chooses, Jesus now makes it unmistakably concrete. This is what it looks like, worked out to the very end.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Whatever You Did for One of the Least of These

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. Jesus pictures Himself sorting the nations the way a shepherd sorts sheep from goats (Matthew 25:32). What does it tell you that this is how He describes the end of all things — not in abstractions, but in hunger, thirst, and shelter?
2. The kingdom the sheep inherit was “prepared... from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). How does it change things to know this welcome was always the plan, not a last-minute decision?
3. Read the six kindnesses in Matthew 25:35–36 slowly: food, drink, welcome, clothing, care, a visit. Which of these feels most within your reach this week?
4. None of the six kindnesses require wealth or power. Why do you think Jesus chose such ordinary, achievable acts as His measure?
5. Is there someone specific — not a category, but an actual person — you could offer one of these six kindnesses to before this study is over?
6. How does it change the way you picture the “end of the story” to know it turns, in part, on such everyday acts?
7. Which of the six kindnesses do you find easiest to offer? Which do you find hardest, and why?
8. Have you ever been on the receiving end of one of these six — fed, welcomed, clothed, visited — at a moment you badly needed it? What did that mean to you?
9. What might stop you, in an ordinary week, from noticing someone who is hungry, thirsty, or a stranger nearby?
10. As you look at your week ahead, name one occasion where you could deliberately practise one of these six kindnesses.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 8 – “When Did We See You?”

What happens next in the story is easy to read past too quickly. The sheep, having just been commended for feeding, clothing, and visiting the King Himself, respond with genuine confusion: “Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?” (Matthew 25:37-39). They are not being falsely modest. They truly do not remember serving a King. They only remember the people in front of them.

That is, perhaps, the most striking detail in the whole scene. The righteous did not keep a tally of kind acts performed in hopes of some future reward, nor did they perform their kindness with half an eye on how it might be received by God. It seems to have simply been how they lived — habitual rather than calculated, so thoroughly woven into their days that they did not think to record it, let alone claim credit for it.

The King's answer settles the mystery, and it is the verse this whole study has been leaning towards: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (Matthew 25:40). Every act of ordinary kindness the sheep had forgotten, Christ Himself had been receiving all along, present in the hungry stranger and the sick neighbour in a way they never knew to look for.

It is worth remembering, too, how this scene began: the King “will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left” (Matthew 25:33) before either group has said a single word in their own defence. The sorting has already happened by the time anyone speaks. What the sheep are commended for was not a performance staged for the judgment; it was simply the shape their lives had already taken, long before they stood before the throne.

There is real freedom in this. If kindness done for reward or recognition is a burden, kindness that has become instinct is something closer to rest. The sheep were not straining to be noticed by Christ. They were simply loving the people around them — and found, to their own surprise, that He had been there all along.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

“When Did We See You?”

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. The sheep in Jesus's story are genuinely surprised — they can't recall ever serving the King at all (Matthew 25:37-39). What do you think their surprise tells us about how this kind of love is meant to work?
2. Have you ever helped someone without any sense that you were doing something noteworthy, and only realised afterwards how much it mattered? What was that like?
3. Jesus says that whatever was done for “one of the least of these” was done for Him personally (Matthew 25:40). How does that change the way you see an ordinary act of kindness?
4. Why do you think the sheep didn't keep a mental record of their kindness, the way we so often do?
5. Is there a person you find it hard to see Christ in? What might it look like to bring that honestly to God this week?
6. How is kindness that has become a habit different from kindness performed for reward or recognition?
7. The sorting in verse 33 happens before either group speaks. What does that suggest about how our lives are already being shaped, long before any final reckoning?
8. What helps kindness become instinct rather than an occasional decision? Is there a practice or rhythm that has helped you in the past?
9. Have you ever discovered, only in hindsight, that an ordinary moment of care mattered more than you realised at the time?
10. What is one relationship in your life where you could aim, this week, to love simply — without keeping score, even in your own mind?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 9 – Whatever You Did Not Do

The same King who, “as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:32), now turns to those on His left, and the scene grows hard to soften: “Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). It is worth pausing here rather than rushing past it. This is a sobering passage, and it deserves to be read honestly rather than defensively — not to frighten, but because Jesus clearly meant for it to be taken seriously.

What is striking is what the goats are actually charged with. Not cruelty. Not active harm. Simply absence: “I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me” (Matthew 25:42-43). Every verb is a negative — a list of things that simply never happened, needs that were never met, not because of any deliberate cruelty but because they were never noticed, or noticed and quietly set aside.

And, remarkably, the goats respond with the very same confusion as the sheep before them: “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?” (Matthew 25:44). Both groups, sheep and goats alike, failed to recognise Christ in the people around them — one group through a lifetime of habitual, unnoticed care, the other through a lifetime of habitual, unnoticed neglect. Neither group was reacting to a King they could see. Both were simply living out what had already become their pattern.

The King's reply mirrors His earlier word to the sheep — “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me” (Matthew 25:40) — almost exactly, only reversed: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me” (Matthew 25:45). It is the same measure, applied the same way, to the same six ordinary needs named earlier in the story. Nothing new is introduced here — only the same standard, now revealing what was missing rather than what was given.

This is not a passage meant to leave anyone paralysed by fear, endlessly auditing their own failures. It is meant to leave us awake — genuinely more likely to notice the person in front of us tomorrow than we were yesterday. The goats' failure was not one dramatic cruelty; it was a habit of looking past. The remedy, thankfully, is not despair, but attention — one more chance, today, to actually see the person God has placed in front of us.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Whatever You Did Not Do

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. The goats in this story are not condemned for cruelty, but for neglect — for what they failed to do (Matthew 25:42-43). Why might neglect be just as serious, in Jesus's eyes, as active wrongdoing?
2. Is there a specific need you have noticed recently, and quietly stepped past? What made it easier to look away than to act?
3. Like the sheep, the goats are also genuinely surprised — “when did we see You...?” (Matthew 25:44). What does it suggest that both groups failed to recognise Christ in the vulnerable, for good or for ill?
4. How is a habit of neglect different from a single act of unkindness? Which do you think is easier to fall into without noticing?
5. The King's words to the goats in verse 45 mirror His words to the sheep in verse 40, only reversed. Why do you think Jesus uses the exact same measure both ways?
6. This is a hard passage. What is one honest, unhurried step you could take this week — not out of fear, but in response to God's grace — towards noticing what you might otherwise miss?
7. Have you ever realised, looking back, that you walked past a need you could easily have met? What helped you see it, even after the fact?
8. How does knowing this passage is meant to wake us up, not merely frighten us, change the way you read it?
9. What practical habits might help you notice a need in the moment, rather than only recognising it afterwards?
10. As this study moves towards its close, is there one relationship or situation where you sense God inviting you to pay closer attention?

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Session 10 – Sent Out as One Body

We began this study with a single sentence that has quietly shaped everything since: “Now you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). Ten sessions later, it is worth returning to it, because it is not only where we started — it is where the whole study has been heading all along. A body, not a crowd. Members, not spectators.

Along the way we learned that this body holds together people the world would keep apart. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Whatever lines still run through the world outside, this study has tried to show that they do not run, in the same way, through the family of God. That was never meant to be a slogan. It was meant to change how we actually treat the person seated next to us.

We also learned what this body is meant to do with its unity: not admire it from a comfortable distance, but let it move outward, towards need. Isaiah's promise still stands over anyone who has taken up the task God actually chooses — sharing bread, loosing chains, opening a door: “The LORD will always guide you... You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11), until, in time, “you will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of the Streets of Dwelling” (Isaiah 58:12). A garden gives its water away, and is not diminished by it.

And we learned, from Jesus's own words, where all of this finally leads — not to a private, comfortable faith, but to a King who is found, quite specifically, in the hungry, the stranger, the person easily overlooked. Everything this study has said about the body and about unity was never meant to stay theoretical. It was always meant to be lived out exactly there.

So we close, not with a final lesson to master, but with a sending. You are a member of one body, joined to people you did not choose and would not have arranged yourself, and Christ Himself is near — closer than expected — to the ones this body is called to serve. May you carry that out from this room, and go on carrying it, long after this study has ended.

Bible Study Notes

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Discussion and Reflection Questions

Sent Out as One Body

Here are some questions to guide your discussion and quiet reflection. There's no need to rush through them all — linger wherever God seems to be at work.

1. Looking back over the whole study, what has struck you most about being “the body of Christ,” each one a member of it (1 Corinthians 12:27)?
2. Which of the four passages we've studied — 1 Corinthians 12, Galatians 3:28, Isaiah 58, or Matthew 25 — has stayed with you most, and why?
3. Galatians 3:28 insists that “you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Has this study changed how you think about anyone you had quietly ranked as more distant from yourself?
4. Isaiah 58:11 promises that a life spent giving to others becomes “like a well-watered garden.” Have you noticed anything like that happening in your own life recently?
5. What is one concrete way you — or your group — will carry the themes of this study forward into ordinary life?
6. Who could you invite to walk alongside you in this, so that it doesn't end when the study does?
7. Of the ten sessions, which one challenged you most? Which one comforted you most?
8. How has your understanding of where to find Christ — in the hungry, the stranger, the overlooked — changed over the course of this study?
9. Is there a specific person or situation this study has brought to mind, again and again, that you sense God asking you to attend to?
10. As you close this study, what is one prayer you want to keep praying, long after this final session?

Bible Study Worksheet

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Worksheet for “One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others”

For Group Leaders and Solo Readers

This worksheet is a supplementary resource for personal engagement with the study. Here's how you might use it:

- **If you're leading a group:** Hand out copies for people to take home. Explain that it's meant for personal reflection and for putting the study into practice, and that finishing it is a blessing but never a requirement. When you gather, invite people to share whatever they're comfortable sharing — what they're learning, where they're struggling, what God has been doing.
- **If you're studying on your own:** Use it as a companion to help the study sink in and take root. It's designed to help you sit with the themes a little longer and carry them into ordinary life.

A word for everyone: this worksheet is a practical tool to help you carry what you've studied here out into your everyday life — into the ordinary places where you'll actually meet the hungry, the overlooked, and the person who doesn't seem to belong. It offers ten simple steps for growth — not a test to pass, but a gentle path to walk. Take them at your own pace, and be kind to yourself as you go.

Bible Study Worksheet

One Body, Many Parts: Belonging and Serving Christ in Others

Ten Steps to Live as One Body

None of these steps is complicated, and you certainly don't have to do them all at once. Take them one at a time, lean on God's grace, and let them help you become someone who doesn't just hear about the body of Christ, but actually lives as part of it.

1. See yourself as placed, not spare (1 Corinthians 12:12-20)

Each morning, remind yourself that you were placed in the body on purpose, not left over — and that this is true of the person beside you too.

2. Say “I need you” (1 Corinthians 12:21-26)

Choose one person you tend to overlook, and find a small, specific way to honour them this week.

3. Use your gift for someone else (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Name your own gift honestly, and put it to use once this week for someone else's good rather than your own credit.

4. Set one old line aside (Galatians 3:26-28)

Notice one way you've quietly ranked someone as more distant from you than yourself, and let it go.

5. Practise the fast God chooses (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Share a meal, open your home, or give something away — one practical act this week, not only a symbolic one.

6. Repair one small breach (Isaiah 58:11-12)

Look for one broken relationship or situation you have some power to help mend, and take a first small step towards it.

7. Offer one of the six kindnesses (Matthew 25:34-36)

Feed, welcome, or clothe — choose one, and do it for an actual person this week, not a general good intention.

8. Serve without keeping score (Matthew 25:37-40)

Do one kind thing and tell no one — not even yourself — that you did it to be noticed.

9. Notice what you'd rather miss (Matthew 25:41-46)

Pay attention to one need you would normally step past this week, and respond, however small the response.

10. Carry it forward together (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Tell one person from your group what you plan to keep doing after this study ends, so it doesn't end with the last session.

May these steps help you leave as more than a reader — a member who knows their place, and who has learned to look for Christ among the ones the world walks past.

Stay Connected with Faith, Hope, and Love Ministries

Thank you for spending this time with us. We'd love to keep walking alongside you — so do stay in touch, and let us know how the study went.

Find Us and Say Hello:

- Facebook: <https://go.fhlm.org/facebook>
- Instagram: <https://go.fhlm.org/instagram>
- LinkedIn: <https://go.fhlm.org/linkedin>
- Website: <https://fhlm.org>
- Email: hello@fhlm.org



Scan here to see our other resources.

Copyright

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. In plain terms: you're free to modify and share this document, as long as you credit the original source, don't use it for commercial purposes, and pass on any adaptations under these same terms.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), used with kind permission. We warmly encourage you to read alongside whichever translation you love best; we don't endorse any single one.

With Thanks

We're deeply grateful to everyone who has supported and prayed for these Bible Study and Reflection Guides.

Pass It On

We love working alongside anyone who shares our heart for serving others. If this guide has been a blessing, please consider donating, volunteering, or simply passing it on to someone else.