

# Unity in the Body of Christ

Bible Background • Ephesians 4:1–16

Printed Text • Ephesians 4:1–16 | Devotional Reading • Romans 12:3–8

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE characteristics of a life worthy of Christ’s calling in building up the body of Christ; CELEBRATE our gifts that help build up the body of Christ; and UNDERSTAND the meaning of the statement “... one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” as it relates to building up the body of Christ.

## In Focus

Aaron said a quick prayer of thanksgiving to God that he was able to walk away from Deacon Foster without an argument. Deacon Foster was a fine deacon, but as he advanced in age, his temperament was becoming more disagreeable. Aaron still had great respect for him, but Aaron and many of the younger members of the church sought some changes in the ministries of the church, including its business practices. Some members were frustrated because they wanted to use their gifts within the church in a more meaningful way.

Aaron laughed to himself, “I’m 42 years old, but ‘Deac’ still looks at me as one of the young folks in the church.”

Deacon Foster saw no need for changes. The church had operated just fine for 137 years, and would continue to do so. That’s when Aaron prayed. There was a time when he would have exploded all over the elderly deacon for being so shortsighted. “By the grace of God,” he thought, “I am maturing in Christ.”

*How can Aaron and the other younger church members use their spiritual gifts to help build up their church? Although each church has its problems, what are some of the ways you can use your gifts to build up your church? Paul helps us in today’s lesson to find some answers.*

## Keep In Mind

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4–5, KJV)

## Words You Should Know

**A. Vocation** (Ephesians 4:1) *klesis* (Gk.) — Invitation, calling.

**B. Grace** (v. 7) *charis* (Gk.) — God’s divine unmerited, undeserved influence upon our hearts.

## Say It Correctly

**Stature.** STACH-er

**Sleight.** slite

## KJV

**Ephesians 4:1-16** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

## NLT

**Ephesians 4:1-16** Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.

2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people."

9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.

10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.

13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.

15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Gifts.** Spiritual gifts are the skills and abilities given to all believers by the Father through His Spirit. These gifts are for the purpose of enabling Christians to carry out His plan. Jesus promised His disciples that they also would receive the gift of the Spirit, who would guide them (Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13). His promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–47). The Spirit was given to every believer. Paul's epistles (letters to the churches) reveal that this continued in all the churches. Every believer receives gifting from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4–7). Spiritual gifts are for the benefit of the body of believers, not just for individual benefit or pleasure. The greatest gift, which Paul said every believer should possess, is love (1 Corinthians 12:31–13:1).

## Background

In previous portions of his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul laid the foundation concerning Christ and His Church. Now, he switches his focus to a more practical purpose, setting out guidelines for his readers concerning Christian conduct. But first, he decides to give them an overview of the church's place in the world. Paul called for the Ephesians to be true to who they are called to be in Christ and noted several truths for them to embrace: (1) it's their responsibility to be one in the body; (2) the call for unity does not mean that they should strive for a type of dull sameness; (3) the church is a living organism, made up of living beings who are expected to grow according to their use of the gifts Christ has given them; (4) Christ desires that the church reach maturity and that the people of the church be prepared to exercise their gifts; and (5) as the church grows, its members should take on the nature and character of its head, Christ Jesus.

### At-A-Glance

1. The Church's Calling to Unity (Ephesians 4:1–6)
2. The Church's Gifts (vv. 7–12)
3. The Road to Maturity (vv. 13–16)

## In Depth

### 1. The Church's Calling to Unity (Ephesians 4:1–6)

Paul considered himself a prisoner for the Lord as well as one who belonged to the Lord. Always positioning himself as the example, he issued a plea to the Ephesian Christians to walk worthy of their "vocation," or to live in a manner that is consistent with their high calling from God (v. 1). The Christian's call is the divine summons that was answered at the time of conversion. Our calling is not a hobby or a pastime. It is our life's achievement—our job.

The word "walk" is a literal translation of a Hebrew idiom for everyday conduct. The word "worthy" makes the connection between God's plan for us and our acceptance of that plan, as demonstrated in the way we live. Paul had previously cautioned against boasting concerning good works. Now, he

advises them to live out their calling with humility. He did not want them to become arrogant about their godly living. They were also to exercise patience toward the faults and failings of others and among those with different personality types and temperaments. We are to genuinely have patience for one another with love. The reason for possessing these qualities—“lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing”—is for unity within the body of Christ (v. 2). When Christ established the Church, He abolished the greatest dividing line within humanity—the barrier that separated Jews and Gentiles.

Now it was the responsibility of the early church members to try with all earnestness to avoid creating human divisions among God’s people. Arguments and dissension threaten to destroy the “bond of peace” within the body of Christ. There is but one Spirit in the church; nothing can destroy that unity. However, bickering and quarrels can destroy the peace that binds the members of the body of Christ. A healthy formula for keeping the unity is threefold: unity in those things that are essential to the faith, liberty in those matters that are nonessential or not absolute, and love in all circumstances.

In spite of the vast number of Christian churches worldwide, there is only one body of believers. The same Spirit who dwells in every believer also dwells in the body of Christ. There is but one hope in which every believer has placed his or her trust. Our one Lord is the Savior who shed His blood for our sins. We all share a common faith in that one Lord and Savior. There is one baptism by which we profess our faith in Christ. The one God and Father is supreme above all.

## **2. The Church’s Gifts (vv. 7–12)**

The unity of the church must be balanced by its odd twin, diversity. Unity is often confused with uniformity. The Christian Church is communal; every member makes a contribution. Each member of the body of Christ has been given grace, or a particular gift or role to fulfill. No two members are alike. No member should try to imitate the other’s gifts. In other letters, Paul outlines the necessity for giving equal value to the gifts of every believer. By His grace, He has given these gifts as He sees fit. The risen Lord bestowed these gifts by first sending His most excellent gift, the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4:8, Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 as a prophecy that the Messiah would ascend to heaven and conquer His foes and lead them captive. As a reward for His victory, He would receive gifts for humankind.

In Ephesians 4:9, Paul wanted to show that the prophecy could have referred only to Christ. If Jesus ascended into heaven, He must have first come down from heaven. Paul and others understood “lower parts of the earth” to mean that Christ descended into hell. The Gospel of Luke, however, indicates that His spirit went to heaven when He died (Luke 23:43, 46). The prophecy of Psalm 68:18 was fulfilled by the birth, death, and burial of Jesus. The ascended Christ is the giver of all gifts and the source of all blessings. He fills all things. In giving us gifts, Christ has a specific purpose in sight. All of God’s saints are to be equipped with the gifts necessary to discharge their duties in the world. In Ephesians 4:10, Paul proceeds to explain the nature of some of these gifts of grace. Apostles were those persons directly commissioned by the Lord to preach the Word and plant churches. They were those who had seen the risen Christ. Prophets were the mouthpieces for God. They received revelations directly from the Lord, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and passed them on to the church. Evangelists are those who preach the Good News. They have been divinely equipped to go out into the world and lead persons to Christ. Pastors are those who serve as God’s under-shepherds, caring for the sheep of His flock. It is their responsibility to guide and feed the flock. The New Testament gives the impression of a number of pastors at a local church instead of one (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1–2).

Teachers are persons divinely gifted to teach and explain the Bible and what it means. A Bible teacher endeavors to connect God's Word into everyday life. The purpose of all these gifts is for leaders to enable "the perfecting (or equipping) of the saints" so that all are prepared "for the work of the ministry" and, ultimately, "for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). These gifts should always be used to empower others to do even greater deeds for the sake of the kingdom.

### **3. The Road to Maturity (vv. 13–16)**

At this point, Paul may have anticipated the question, "How long will this process of growing continue?" In verse 13, Paul explains that this will go on "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Little can prepare the mind for the unity that exists in the afterlife. As long as we live, no matter how hard we try, we will have innumerable differences. This will continue until we are able to see Him as He truly is and to know as we are known. At that time the "unity of the faith" will occur. Until then, there will be room for growth. When we obtain full knowledge, we enter the state of "perfect man." The word "perfect," used in the King James Version, is translated "complete." Our Christian journey is done when we come to the place of full knowledge of Christ and unity of our faith.

Verses 14–15 describe the growth process in the body of Christ. As we continue toward spiritual maturity, some things will become apparent. We are no longer like "children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (v. 14). As we grow to be more like Him, we grow in our knowledge of Him. Our understanding is solid and sure. No one can then persuade us to change our beliefs. All disciples are called upon to grow. Discipleship is a process. It is not a course of study from which we will earn a diploma and never revisit again. There is always room for growth, for training, for new understanding, and for enlightenment. As we grow in Christ, so do our challenges. The longer we live, if we are achieving spiritual maturity, we learn to lean on Him more, trusting more fully in His promises and His providence. When we encounter brothers and sisters who have gone astray in their thinking and beliefs, we are commanded to speak "the truth in love," helping each other to grow toward the head, which is Christ Jesus. He is both the goal of our growth and the source of our growth. As the church receives its life from Him who supplies all of our needs, quite naturally, growth comes from Him, too. But Paul adds that the church grows "toward" Christ as we as individuals grow "in" Christ.

#### **Search the Scriptures**

1. What did Paul "beseech" the Ephesian Christians to do (Ephesians 4:1)?
2. What reasons does Paul give them for exhibiting characteristics such as lowliness and meekness (v. 3)?
3. What are the seven things we are to share as one (vv. 4–6)?
4. How is the body of Christ put together through Christ (v. 16)?

#### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. Some Christians tend to forget that their talents and abilities are spiritual gifts from God. In what ways do believers begin to take credit for themselves? Include yourself.

#### **Liberating Lesson**

There is a real danger among Christians to look at ourselves as having "arrived" in regard to our spiritual growth. We can never fully know God in this life; therefore, Christian discipleship is not a course of study to be completed. It is a process that causes us to change and grow continuously if we yield ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are never too old to learn in matters

concerning the kingdom. The oldest, most seasoned Christian can still learn about God’s love from a newborn baby. A true sign of Christian maturity is in knowing there is still more to be known.

### **Application for Activation**

Are there ways that you stunt your own spiritual growth because you are not willing to lend yourself to new challenges that are presented to you? Do you ever think, “I’m too old to be learning how to do that now,” or “I’ve lived long enough to know what I’m talking about”? Think about an area of your life where you may be inhibiting your spiritual development, thereby building a wedge between you and the Father.

### **Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

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### **Remember Your Thoughts**

Special insights I have learned:

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## **More Light on the Text**

### **Ephesians 4:1–16**

**1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,**

Paul starts this chapter with an appeal for us to live a Christ-filled life. Using an emphatic first person pronoun “I” (Gk. ego, eg-O), Paul begins his appeal by reintroducing himself as “the prisoner of the Lord.” This emphasizes his apostolic authority. The use of the conjunction “therefore” (Gk. oun, oon) adds the emphatic nature of the ego. The phrase can then be reworded in view of this (i.e., in view of the things God has done through history): I, a prisoner of the Lord, appeal to you. The phrase “the prisoner” (Gk. desmios, DES-mee-os), or captive “of the Lord” means that Paul regarded himself as both a prisoner of Jesus as an apostle and as one in custody for the Gospel. Both his authority as an apostle and his conviction as a man under arrest motivates his appeal to believers. Paul urges them to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of their calling. Because the Christian life is a response to God’s call in one’s life, he or she then has to conduct themselves in a way that would show this commitment.

**2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;**

Paul gives five characteristics of the life worthy of our calling: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering (patience), mutual forbearance, and love. The unity of the church starts with individuals maintaining moral qualities. To maintain unity in the church, we are to walk in “lowliness” (Gk. tapeinophrosune,

tap-i- nof-ros-00-nay), or “humility.” Humility was a debasing quality and an unacceptable virtue in Paul’s society. This was especially true among people in the Greek world. The word is better translated as “lowliness of mind,” a state of thinking and operating in a way that recognizes the value of others. We are to walk in “meekness” (Gk. praotes, prah-00-tace) or “gentleness.” Matthew Henry defines meekness in this passage: “That excellent disposition of soul which makes men unwilling to provoke others and not easily to be provoked or offended with their infirmities; and it is opposed to angry resentments and peevishness.”

Meekness is the gentleness of the strong one who has their strength under control. Such a person, though he or she has a certain right or authority, would decide not to lay claim to it. The next two characteristics that will foster unity in the Body of Christ also go together. One of these characteristics is “longsuffering”— (Gk. makrothumia, mak-roth-oo-MEE-ah), or “patience,” “endurance.” This means not seeking revenge or being easily aggravated by others. This is a virtue God shows to us through Christ. Another characteristic is “forbearing one another” (Gk. anechomai, an-EKH-om-ahee), which means “putting up with,” “enduring,” and “bearing” with someone’s errors. It means being tolerant toward others and cultivating a mutual understanding between people. These four characteristics are anchored in love, and they form the basis and foundation for unity in the church.

### **3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

In verse 3, Paul identifies the nature of the closeness among believers as the unity of the Spirit. He encourages the church in “endeavouring” (Gk. spoudazo, spoo-DAD-zo) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It means “sparing no effort” or, as we idiomatically express it, “leaving no stone unturned.” This is done in order to maintain the unity of the Spirit. In other words, we should do our utmost to preserve harmonious fellowship. Such unity starts within the individual hearts of its members. Preserving this unity, therefore, depends on both individual and cooperative efforts of all members of the body of Christ.

### **4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

### **5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

### **6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

Paul declares implicitly that the oneness of the church arises from the unity of the Godhead—referring to the Trinity. First, the church is one Body because there is one Spirit who created it. The unity of this Body is because of the work of the Holy Spirit who also indwells it. The one Spirit unifies the Body and works through it. The various parts of the Church are joined as one Body by the Holy Spirit to the head, who is Christ. The Church is called into one hope, which refers to the present reality and the future benefit of life everlasting.

Second, the reality of the Christian calling and hope is founded on the one Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the object of our faith and the One in whom all Christians hold their belief and in whom all are baptized. “One faith” refers both to the Gospel, which embodies the doctrine of the Christian faith and the gift of faith whereby all Christians are saved (see Ephesians 2:8-10). One baptism is the liturgical rite through which we profess our faith when we believe in the atoning death and resurrection of Christ for our sin. By being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we declare our union with the one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Third, the church is described as one family in which every believer belongs. There is only one God who is the “Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (4:6). This cluster of phrases describes the greatness and magnitude of this one God who all Christians have in common as our Father.

**7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

**8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.**

Although there is unity of belief and purpose, there is also diversity and uniqueness of gifts and function. In Ephesians 4:8, Paul quotes Psalm 68:18 to confirm his emphasis on the gifts through Christ. The sentence, “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men,” refers to Christ’s position at the right hand of the Father as conqueror over death, having defeated Satan and his agents. Christ liberated those who were bound and took them like captives into heaven. From there, He gives gifts to the Church, which refers to the bestowing of gifts of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

**9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)**

**10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)**

Verses 9–10 in parentheses serve as support and elaboration of Christ’s ascension. Paul argues in defense of the death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ. Since Jesus ascended into heaven, He must also have descended from heaven. Verse 10 insists that the one who descended is the same who ascended far above everything else, that He might “fill all things.” The phrase “fill all things” (Gk. pleroo, play- RO-o) means to accomplish or fulfill all things. It speaks about completing His mission. The purpose of His ascension into heaven is then to free Him to accomplish fully the purpose for which He descended. That purpose includes the distribution of gifts to the Church by the Holy Spirit.

**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;**

**12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:**

Through the Holy Spirit, God equips the church with special abilities He bestows on each member for the benefit of all. In this text, there is an emphasis on gifts given to leaders of the church. The word “apostle” (Gk. apostolos, ap-OS-tol-os) is used in several ways in the New Testament. In this case, “apostle” refers to those who were eyewitnesses to the risen Lord, chosen and authorized by Christ (Acts 1:21, 22; 10:40–41; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 15:8–9). Some of these apostles were still alive during the time of the writing of Ephesians. The next gift is the “prophets” (Gk. prophetes, prof-AY-tace) with special ability from God to give guidance to the Christian community and to declare the will of God (e.g., Acts 13:1–4). Next are the “evangelists” (Gk. euaggelistes, yoo-ang-ghel- is-TACE), preachers or those who proclaim the Gospel (e.g., Philip, Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5). The use of euaggelistes in Ephesians 4:11 relates to the spreading of the Good News. Then we have the “pastors” (Gk. poimen, poy- MANE), or “shepherds” and “teachers” who give instructions.



These gifts have a twofold importance of function and purpose. The primary function is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The other function is for building up the Body of Christ. The word translated “perfecting” is the Greek word *katartismos* (kat-ar-tis-MOS), which means “equipping, preparing, or making ready.” Therefore, the function of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is to prepare God’s People, equipping them for the work of “ministry” (Gk. *diakonia*, de-ak-on-EE-ah). They are endowed with the grace of God in order to train people to do the work of service within the church community. They are “equippers” who provide others in the church with necessary tools for the ministry.

The ultimate purpose of these special gifts is to edify or build up the Body of Christ. The word used here in the King James Version is “edifying” (Gk. *oikodome*, oy-kod-om-AY), with an architectural undertone. It means building a house, but used figuratively here, it refers to building up the Church of Christ. We have been called to build one another up in the Lord in love.

**13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:**

**14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;**

The church is called to unity, and this is made possible only by our spiritual knowledge of who Christ is and why He died. The full unity and knowledge of the Son of God leads to maturity— “unto a perfect man” (v. 13). “Perfect” (Gk. *teleios*, tel-I-ocē) refers to that which has reached the age of maturity or adulthood, rather than moral perfection. The proof of maturity is the unity that the church attains through its knowledge of Christ. This matured personhood or “perfect human” is measured according to Christ’s standards: “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (v. 13). In verse 7, Christ is the measure of God’s grace. He is the measure—or the yardstick—of all maturity. Although the concept of growth into maturity is corporate, the maturity of the church depends on the growth of individual members.

Children have the tendency to be easily deceived and attracted to new things. When children grow to adulthood these tendencies diminish. Maturity in the knowledge of Christ will protect the Church from being misled. In verse 14, Paul illustrates this with use of the words “tossed to and fro” (Gk. *kludonizomai*, kloo-do-NID-zom-ahee), or “tossed here and there” and “carried about” (Gk. *periphero*, per- ee-FER-o), which means to be “driven around” or “carried around.” Such people cannot make up their minds but change from one opinion to another “by every wind of doctrine.” This often happens as a result of the last teaching or the latest books they’ve read or information they’ve received. As a result, they become easy prey to people’s cunning craftiness, those who lie in wait to deceive. “The sleight” (Gk. *kubeia*, koo- Bl-ah) literally means “dice playing” and is used metaphorically here to describe the deception, trickery, and manipulation of unscrupulous men who take advantage of people’s ignorance.

**15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:**

Paul moves from the mark of immaturity, which is doctrinal instability, to the qualities of mature, or perfected Christianity that will promote unity and peace within the Body. Truth and love are essential in the life of the Body of Christ, both leading to Church growth. It is important for the Christian to hold firm and be loyal to the truth on the one hand and to have loving concern for others’ welfare on the other.

**16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.**

Paul then employs biological metaphors using human anatomy to describe the Church's relationship with Christ. Paul compares the natural body and the Christ's mystical body, the Church. As the Body has many component parts, which are joined fittingly together by different ligaments to the head, with each part working corporately with other parts, so it is with the church. The Church has many members with various functions, joined fittingly together by the Holy Spirit unto Christ—the head. The Holy Spirit has endowed every member with various gifts and skills; each member should then work corporately with every other member in love.

Consequently, love is essential for the proper function of the Church. Love is the life line that keeps the Church alive and united. Mutual love encourages church growth and allows the Church to develop in the love of Christ.

# Daily Bible Readings

## **MONDAY**

One Lord  
(Zechariah 14:6–11)

## **TUESDAY**

One Faith  
(Philippians 1:27–30)

## **WEDNESDAY**

One in Christ Jesus  
(Galatians 3:23–29)

## **THURSDAY**

One God  
(Exodus 20:1–7)

## **FRIDAY**

One Spirit  
(1 Corinthians 12:4–13)

## **SATURDAY**

One Body  
(Romans 12:3–8)

## **SUNDAY**

Building Up the Body Together  
(Ephesians 4:1–16)