



The Gift of One Another

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

What do you think when I say the word “church”? Many think of a service they attend on Sundays. “We’re going to church today.” Some, who understand the word a little better, think of the people who are gathering on those Sundays. Sadly, many think of “church” as a burden. The church is people we have to please. “Church” means responsibilities, assignments, and work. However, I’d like to share the perspective of **Romans 12:3-8**. God did not establish the local church to be a burden; He established it to be a blessing, a gift. Instead of handing each of us a Bible and sending us out into the wilderness of life on our own, He gave us the gift of one another. Sadly, I think relatively few Christians ever make the most of this gift. Too many of us spend our time trying to run and hide from this gift of God. We build walls, afraid of making real connections with these people God has given to us as a gift. Examine **Romans 12:3-8** with me and let me share four encouraging lessons I gain from this text to help us see how what we’ve got here is a gift from God Himself.

Discussion:

I. We don’t have to face life alone.

- A. Let’s face it. Life is tough. While we have plenty of good times, we have our fair share of hard times. We face family stress, work troubles, financial fears. We are bombarded daily with temptations and trials. Satan is working overtime to get our hearts and souls. He doesn’t want us making it through this life. According to **I Peter 5:8**, Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. There is no doubt that we can’t make it on our own.
- B. Do you ever feel like you are all alone? Do you ever feel like you just can’t make it, but you have no one to turn to? No one would understand. No one would be patient with you. No one could help. It’s just you against the world. In that place, you can even begin to think that the only possible way to overcome is if God would just let you leave this life right now. Elijah felt that even after one of his greatest victories. In **I Kings 18**, Elijah had undergone the contest on Mt. Carmel. Baal had not lit the fires of his prophets’ altar. Jehovah, however, had responded immediately to Elijah. The people saw who was the true God and they slew the false prophets, executing them for their idolatry and rebellion against the one true God. However, that didn’t change anything with Jezebel. Instead of repenting, in **I Kings 19:2**, Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah for this victory. In **I Kings 19:4**, he asked that God let him die. Why? **I Kings 19:10, 14** explain it. Elijah believed he was all alone. He had fought valiantly. He had upheld God’s will. He had taught God’s Word. He had stood against the enemies. But nothing was changing and he was all alone. Notice God’s response in **I Kings 19:18**. Elijah was not alone. God said there were 7,000 other faithful servants in Israel. No doubt, that is a small number compared to all of Israel. But Elijah wasn’t alone. God wanted Elijah to know there were others.
- C. **Romans 12:3-8** demonstrates the same point. We gather here repeatedly not simply in order to check “assembly” off of our “Christian obedience card.” We gather here to remind us we are not alone. Look around you. No doubt everyone here is at a different level of spirituality. Some have had victories we haven’t had. Some are farther along than we are. But what we all have in common is that we are sinners in need of a Savior (cf. **Romans 3:23**). Every person in this room faces struggles. Every person faces temptation. Every person here has fallen to temptation. We all want to overcome sin. We all want to make it through our tribulations, trials, and struggles. God has given us each other; He has put us in a body so we can help each other. You are not alone. Don’t let Satan make you think you can’t rely on us. We are not only members of this body, we are members of one another. You are not alone. Don’t make the mistake of coming into this building week after week, but facing life alone. As **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** says, two are better than one and three are better than two. Do more than “go to church” with these people. Find folks in here who can face life with you.

II. Everything does not rest on your shoulders.

- A. One of the problems with feeling alone is thinking everything rests on your shoulders. That is a lot of pressure. I don’t know how many Christians I’ve met who struggle under the burden of thinking it is their sole job to make sure everything is done properly. They feel the pressure to be involved in every aspect of the work. They overwhelm themselves with responsibilities and commitments. Eventually, they burn out under all that pressure.
- B. **Romans 12:3-8** explains that God put us together as a body. That means no one of us has all the responsibility. No one of us has to bear the entire burden. We have each other. Paul elaborates on this in **I Corinthians 12:12-26**. No doubt, you have responsibility within this body, but you don’t have all the responsibilities. Could you im-

agine the eye trying to do the hearing? Could you imagine the feet trying to do the grasping? What pressure each part of the body would feel if it all rested on them. But God didn't put us in the body so the whole burden could rest on us. God put us in the body to do our part and rely on others to do theirs.

- C. Consider the example in **Acts 6:1-6**. If anyone had pressure of making sure things went right, it was the apostles. But even they recognized the blessing of being part of a body. When the Hellenistic widows were not being cared for properly, they didn't have to do it all. They selected seven other men to lead that work.
- D. Again, we all have responsibilities within the body. According to **Ephesians 4:15-16**, the body is held together and built up by that which every joint supplies. But what a blessing to know that the whole burden is not resting on our shoulders. God gave us one another so we could work together and rely on each other, so that none of us would have to be a lone ranger and bear all the pressure.

III. We need others.

- A. While not facing life alone and not having to bear all the burden sound like blessings, in our independent American culture, some of us can't seem to accept the blessing of being part of a body. We have been raised with the ideal of pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps, standing tall, and going it on our own. The idea of relying on others is anathema to us. One of the most common refrains among American Christians is that our spirituality is between us and God, no one else should be involved. Oh sure, if someone has a real problem, they need help. But not me. I don't have those kinds of problems. We even try to make a doctrinal matter out of this spiritual independence. It has been my experience that just about every time I bring up the need for accountability partners someone starts talking to me about the "Prayer Partners" of the Boston Church. We definitely do not need the life control and denominational hierarchy of partners that the Boston Church taught. But we do need each other. Our spirituality is not simply between us and God. God has put us together because we need others.
- B. Paul specifically deals with this issue in **Romans 12:3**. He says we must not think too much of ourselves. Paul's point is that we need to humble ourselves and realize that not only are we not burdened with doing everything on our own, we can't. We need others. Just consider the number of passages that express this need.
 - 1. We've already read **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**. Two are better than one. Three are better than two. We need others.
 - 2. **Hebrews 10:24** says we need to provoke one another to love and good deeds. We need that provocation, that support, that help. We need others.
 - 3. **James 5:16** tells us we need to confess to each other and pray for each other. We need others.
 - 4. **I Corinthians 12:21** explains that we simply cannot say to others that we don't need them, no matter what we can do or what they can do. We need others.
 - 5. We read **Ephesians 4:15-16** that explains growth takes what everyone can provide. We need others.
- C. You may be doing great spiritually right now. You may think you don't need others. But like **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** says, sooner or later you will be attacked. Sooner or later you will fall. You need to use this time of strength to develop relationships with others who will be able to support you when you are struggling. You need others.

IV. Others need you.

- A. Amazingly, just as there are some who think they don't need others, there are some on the other end of the spectrum. They think no one needs them. **Romans 12:4-5** explains that each member of the body has their own separate function. That means you have a function that the others need you to do.
- B. In **I Corinthians 12:14-17**, Paul explained that you are needed no matter what function you perform. Perhaps you are a foot. Do not say that you are not needed because you are not a hand. Perhaps you are an ear. Do not say that because you are not an eye, you are not needed. Others need you.
- C. I love what Paul explains in **I Corinthians 12:18**. God has put each member of the body right where He wants it in order to accomplish what He wants it to. Just like the eyes and ears are in our bodies exactly where God wants them in order to see and hear, you are in this body exactly where God wants you to be in order to accomplish God's work here. Think about that. You are here because God has a function for you here. Others need you.
- D. Perhaps the greatest blessing in this gift of one another is having a place to belong. But not only belong, having a group with which to be involved. In this gift of one another, God has provided a purpose, a greater mission. He has provided you with meaning to your life. Look around at these people. I know that many of us look around and see people we think are so much stronger than us. They don't need the help we need. But they do. Just like we have to learn that we are attacked and we fall and need others, we need to see that will happen to the folks around us. Just as we need their support, they need ours. We are needed.

Conclusion:

The church is not a burden. It is not simply responsibility. The church is God's gift to us. We need the church as much as we need Jesus, the Spirit, the Bible. Look around at the people here. You are not alone. This is God's gift to you—the gift of one another. Don't leave it unopened. Enjoy it. Be supported by it. Be part of it.