

Daily Devotional, March 11, 2021 The Active, Visible Body of Christ

....speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV)

The Apostle Paul in this passage, gives us a clear image of the nature and function of the Body of Christ. Each individual is a segment of the complete body and each individual is important. Also, each and every person must be conscientious in keeping the body operating healthily, because when this is done, the Body of Christ grows in love and compassion.

A part of being a functioning member of the Body of Christ requires perceiving the "light" in others. Author Henry Nouwen once told an old Hebrew parable which encapsulates the importance of this range of sight. The rabbi asked his students, "How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?" One of the rabbi's students suggested, "When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?" "No," the rabbi said. "Is it when one can distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine?" asked a second student. "No," the rabbi said. "Please tell us the answer then," said the students. "It is when you can look into the face of another human being and you have enough light in you to recognize your brother or your sister. Until then it is night, and darkness is still with us."

Not only does he enlighten us on how to recognize the light in others, [Nouwen](#) provides steps in developing into an active Body of Christ. These steps are: solitude, community, and ministry. He uses the following illustration: Jesus prayed at night, in solitude; in the morning, he formed a community of disciples, and in the afternoon, Jesus ministered to the people, by healing the sick, and proclaiming the Good News. Solitude, community, and ministry are crucial activities of the Body of Christ, but that does not mean that each member is perfect; however, it does mean that each member actively moves beyond a life of self-interest to a life of commitment, together, as the people of God.

As this pandemic has stretched from weeks to months, and now a year, finding healthful ways to pilot a course for our lives has become anxious and exhausting. And on top of that, some communities are experiencing more political polarization. Some believers may wonder how to effectively function as one body in a time like this. But the answer is in understanding that the Body of Christ is splendidly arranged for growth and rigor. Every member contributes to its healthful and harmonious action, and one member lends vitality and beauty to another, so that the whole body is finely proportioned and splendidly sustained, with love. Here's praying that we all are willing to find our perfect fit.

Prayer: God, may Your light of Hope shine through in our darkness and into our lives today. Help our church body to walk in a manner worthy of the calling You have given us. Grant us patience with one another, may we bear with one another in love. And may You grant the Body of Christ complete unity in You. In Christ's name, Amen.