

Be A Part

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The Bible deals with persons—individuals. Nowhere in all the divine directive is there an activity enjoined which does not require personal action for its fulfillment. Some activities require joint participation between individuals, some assignment can and must be done alone, but in all cases it is the individual who is the unit of function. This necessarily implies that every individual is important. He is important, first of all, for the performance of those responsibilities which are to be done independently, by himself. But he is also important to the fulfillment of those obligations in which he is necessarily involved with others, or what may properly be described as collective actions.

To be a part of something is to sustain some sort of relationship to the whole. Since a share is given to the whole by being a part, only as every part functions properly does the whole do its job. This is precisely the point of Paul's observation in Ephesians 4:16, "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." Every joint supplies for the benefit of the whole; every part helps make the increase of the entirety.

In this connection, may I suggest that:

Everyone has a part. That's every one. This is a simple statement, but one not often as recognized as it should be. It is a fact that each person in the local church has a part in that local church. It should be more obvious than it is that every part is important and not one single part unimportant. When any part of something fails, the whole suffers. And while I would certainly not subscribe to the idea that the church is only as strong as its weakest member, I would definitely warn that any local church is only as strong as the members which comprise it. You see, the local church only functions as well as the parts of which it is constructed, and if this local church is not doing all it should, it is because some of its parts are not functioning as they should.

Every part must be in its place. No one in his right mind would put a clothes hanger in a light socket, even though both these things are useful to carrying on a functional household. Many of the problems in churches today are caused by the desire of some to be involved in places where they have not the ability or qualifications to function properly. Because of their envy for someone with admirable talent in a certain area, they tend to "get out of place." They have the notion that because they are not the hand they are not of the body; or because they are not an eye they serve no useful function to the body. Such foolishness! Paul deals with this same proclivity in I Corinthians 12:2. Says he, "If the whole body were the eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were the hearing where were the smelling?" What every person should do is seek to find his own place, then do the best job he can wherever he is.

One part can't be every part. There are some people who have been blessed with an immense amount of native talent. Two things often happen because of it. First, they themselves come to feel so superior that they somehow forget that they are still only a part, not the whole. Or it may be that others who recognize their special amount of ability tend to assign to them more than their logical part. In either case, trouble will ensue, because no person, no matter his talent, can comprise the whole. I certainly do not intend that this talented individual is not vital and helpful in his connection with others, but I do intend to say that no man should ever assume more than his own responsibility, nor should he be charged with more than his own ability will allow him to accomplish. You see, it takes all the parts—and “if they were all one member, where were the body?” (I Corinthians 12:19).

Every person is important. There are no unnecessary organs in the body of Christ. There are no big Christians and little Christians in the body—only a fellowship of forgiven sinners—each related to the other in Christ Jesus. Every person should try to find his own place and how he relates to the whole. Then, being content with his own assignments, do the best job possible so that he helps the whole body function as it should. We have a need for one another, so let everyone do his part. Be who you are and serve.