

Sunday, January 23, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
“You Are the Body”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants share stories of those who were willing to offer acts of humble service.

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Context.) This week's reading is Paul's elegant description of the body of Christ, and the beauty and appropriateness of the great diversity and variety of its members, using the analogy of the human body. Paul writes this to a congregation in Corinth that was apparently rather obsessed with hierarchy and rank.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Ask participants if they agree or disagree with the following statements (in general). Why or why not?
 - Adults don't like to ask for help.
 - Adults are uncomfortable with being vulnerable with others.
 - Adults need others to thrive.
 - Adults like to think they can provide for themselves without the help of others.
- What point do you think Paul might be making by listing the “various kinds of tongues” last in his list of gifts (verses 28)?
- Paul observes that some gifts seem to have more “honor” than others. Which gifts are more esteemed or respected in your church? Which gifts are likely to be underappreciated?
- Paul is writing to an ethnically diverse group in Corinth. There would also have been clear status divisions in the society between the freed men and the slaves. How do you think this church (or likely groups of churches) would have received verse 13? What are the implications for the church today?

- Are we needier than we like to admit? [Usually, the answer is yes. We need others support more than we realize. We are likely to overlook how others contribute to our flourishing.]
- How might the American virtue of being independent or having autonomy be in conflict with the Christian value of being interdependent? Why do you think being needy is frowned upon by our society? Is being needy always wrong?

Practice:

Allow someone to serve you (someone who does not get paid for the service). How does it feel? Why does being the recipient of other people’s service make us uncomfortable?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Gracious God, giver of every good and perfect gift and the provider of life, help us to see our dependence on you and how we are interconnected to others. May we appreciate all people’s giftedness and contributions to the body of Christ. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.