

# The healthy church

*ODCC 03/05/09 (The healthy church.doc)*

**Text:** 1 Cor 12

## Introduction

1. Last week I spoke on the healthy Christian and as I said then, I was only touching on a few important points. We could easily speak on that topic for many weeks.
  - a. I want to speak about the healthy church today and the same applies – I am only touching on a few key points.
  - b. There is reciprocity between the health of a church and the health of a Christian, i.e. a healthy church aids health in a believer and a healthy believer contributes to the health of a church.
  - c. Forgive me for spelling that out. If the church leadership do not ensure that the church is established on a good Biblical pattern, the members will suffer, and if the members do not act responsibly according to Biblical teaching then the church suffers.
  - d. So the leadership has responsibility and the members have responsibility. If we do not take our responsibility seriously then everyone suffers.

## Looking at the church

1. A church is described as a body and teaches that as a body is made up of different members – that is, different body parts, the church likewise has different members who function for the good and health of the Church.
  - a. Paul very discreetly explains that some parts are beautiful to look at, some parts are functional in order for the body to be motivated, to work, to experience sense and to communicate, etc. Others parts are hidden away and function internally. And some parts are unrepresentable yet treated with special modesty, etc.
  - b. As kids you probably asked each other the hypothetical questions. Would you rather lose your sight or your hearing? Would you rather have no legs than no arms? Of course, some body parts are more dispensable than others but it's all of the parts that make up a whole.
  - c. I'd be able to live a normal life if I lost one of my little fingers but I wouldn't want to lose even the tip of a finger and if I did, I'd miss it for the rest of my life.
2. A church can function quite well without certain parts, or gifts but when it is complete and none of the parts of malfunctioning, then it is most healthy.
  - a. What is a church? It is anywhere where 2 or 3 (or more) regularly gather together to pray; to praise; to study the Word; to encourage, exhort and minister to each other; and to be a witness in the community.
  - b. In a smaller church you might have to exercise more faith by doing things above and beyond your gifting. See a man with only one leg; his arms help him move with the aid of crutches by lifting the body so that the one leg can move forward. Here the arms assist the legs
  - c. In a larger church you might, as a body part, become infirm or weak because of non-use. And then still, the body parts that are functioning are working really hard to carry the body parts that are not functioning.
3. By being born a place is made for me in the family. And as I grow and mature I still have a place though my relationship changes. I marry and have children of my own and I care for them and as they grow I am teaching them to care for themselves.
  - a. Spiritual birth is exactly the same. As I am born again of God, place is made for me in a family. The more mature spiritual members are there as my fathers and mothers and older brothers and sisters.
  - b. They are there to care for me and nurture me and and teach me and help me to grow and care for myself but as I do, so I become an older sibling and then a parent.

## Body part functions

1. Last week as we looked at a healthy Christian I mentioned that often, when everything is going well for us in the physical and material realm we may overlook the spiritual person and not realise that we are not well (spiritually).
  - a. The same can apply in the church. We might think that every activity in the church is undertaken by paid or volunteer people. I might or I might not get involved depending on my time, my commitments, etc.

- b. In other words, to function is optional. But not according to God's Word. To function is natural and to function is expected.
  - c. You may be spiritually tender like baby Luc (recently born to parents in the church). Right now he's totally dependent on everyone for his survival. But before you know it he'll be sitting on his own, and then crawling, and then walking and that development will be for the rest of his life.
2. My passion as a minister has always been to help people develop and function as God intended. Has God put it on your heart to preach? I'll give you opportunity to exercise and develop your gift – I'm not threatened. I have what God has given me and as I have been faithful He has helped me to develop. If God gives you more that's God's business and I'll make way for you.
- a. Has God put a burden on you to pray? Then pray for the people in the church – God will teach you how to become an intercessor and you will see God move in answer to your praying.
  - b. Has God given you a singing voice – there is always a need for people to help us worship by singing or playing a musical instrument.
  - c. Are you the kind of person who likes to help? There's always plenty of menial tasks that need doing. Menial doesn't mean unimportant!
3. This is a much bigger topic than what I have time to cover today but then there are spiritual gifts, gifts like wisdom and faith and healing, etc. and I will definitely be bringing more in-depth teaching on this at some point.
- a. The point is, that our gifts are given to us by God – they are His gifts to us. And as we function, then what God has given us become gifts to someone else.
  - b. I repeat what I said earlier on, at Open Door I am very keen to help people discover exactly what God wants them to do and to encourage them to do it because the church is a body and you and I are members.