

# STRUCTURE DETERMINES FUNCTION: THE CHURCH BODY

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Romans 12:4-5

"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."

1 Corinthians 12:12

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

1 Corinthians 12:26-27

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Ephesians 4:16

"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. "

Cells are the basic building blocks of all living things. The human body is composed of trillions of cells. These provide the structure for the body, take in nutrients, convert those nutrients into energy, carry out specialized functions, and contain the body's hereditary material. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA.

DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA. The information in DNA is stored as a code made up of four chemical bases. DNA bases pair up with each other to form units called base pairs. Each base is also attached to a sugar molecule and a phosphate molecule. Together, a base, sugar, and phosphate are called a nucleotide. Nucleotides are arranged in two long strands that form a spiral called a double helix.

Each strand of DNA in the double helix can serve as a pattern for replicating itself. This is critical when cells divide because each new cell needs to have an exact copy of the DNA present in the old cell. The genetic code is the basis of all life on earth, and the structure and function of DNA support the cell's ability to create proteins and RNA to carry out all cellular functions.

Just as in the cell structure or the complicated composition of one's DNA structure, it is evident that even the **smallest** parts play a **vital role** in the **FUNCTIONING** of the entire system. This same concept can be applied to the Church as the Body of Christ.

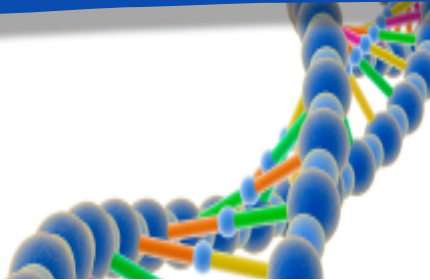
## WHO IS THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Paul tells us in Corinthians that the church is the Body of Christ. The church is made up of all of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. As a Christian, you are a part of the Body of Christ!

## ORGANIZATION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Body of Christ is a **unit**. Within the unit there is structure. Just as nucleus serves as the cell's command center, sending direction to the cell, *Ephesians 1:22-23* explains that God is the head of The Church:

*"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."*



And just as a cell or DNA structure is composed of many different parts, they unite to create a complete unit. Paul explains, in *1 Corinthians 12:27-28*, that there is a structure within the body of the church:

*"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."*

There is order within the body, but no person or part is insignificant but rather **contributes** to the overall functioning of the **SYSTEM**.



THE BIBLE EXPLAINS THAT WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES AS CHRISTIANS. AS THE BODY OF CHRIST WE ARE TO...

- PROMOTE UNITY (EPHESIANS 4:25)
- SERVE (1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11)
- SHARE THE NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST (ROMANS 1:16)
- WORSHIP GOD (PSALM 92:1-2)
- LOVE EACH OTHER (1 JOHN 4:11)

## STRUCTURE DETERMINES FUNCTION

**ANATOMY** is defined as the structure of parts of the body and how they fit together as one cohesive unit to carry out the body's **PHYSIOLOGY** or the intended function. In other words, the structure determines the function. Your brain transmits signals, your heart pumps blood, and your stomach digests food... if you change the structure you change the function.

Christians make up the **STRUCTURE** of the Church, which **FUNCTIONS** to strengthen the Body of Christ. When most people think of church, they think of a building people go to on Sunday to hear about teachings of the Bible. The church is **NOT** the building, but rather the people **INSIDE** the building. It is a living thing; it is a body.

Each Christian has been given a gift or gifts and is called to use these in order to strengthen, build up, and serve The Church. Just like a cell or DNA in the human body, no part is insignificant. As a Christian, you are a part of the structure and have a role... you help determine the functioning of the whole system. Do not try to go about it alone—you won't make it. You **NEED** your other parts. When parts blend together correctly, Christ is revealed!

## DIFFERENT GIFTS

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." – Romans 12: 6-8

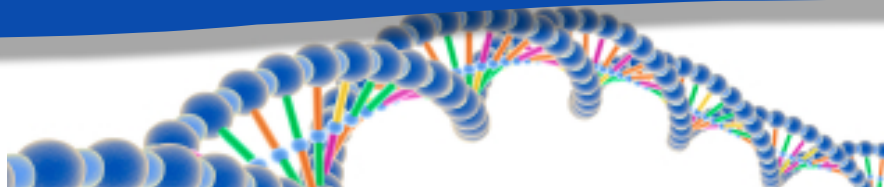
## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 📖 [Body of Christ: The Church](#)  
All About God
- 📖 [Divisions in the Church](#)  
John Stevenson
- 📖 [True Unity](#)  
Brent Barnett
- 📖 [Why We Need Unity](#)  
Greg Laurie
- 🎵 [If We Are The Body](#)  
Casting Crowns

*Ask yourself:  
As a Christian what gift(s) have you been given? Are you using your gift(s)? As a part of the Body of Christ, what can you do to contribute and strengthen The Church?*

## WHEN PARTS DON'T BLEND

Read the following story:



*Once upon a time there was a body. It had enjoyed a healthy birth and a normal growth. Although there had been times of brief sickness and discomfort, these went through the usual healing processes and the body continued to grow and to function. Then one day, the toes began to discuss among themselves the importance of wearing comfortable shoes. In the course of the conversation, it was observed that no other part of the body was in the habit of wearing shoes. "But shoes are necessary for the protection of the body!" exclaimed one of the big toes. "We need to convince the other members of the body that they should also take to wearing shoes. But alas, the other members of the body could not see the need and would not comply with such demands. The toes decided that, for the good of the body, they would separate themselves from the other members of the body. This had raised the question of what the various members of the body ought to wear. The legs stated that trousers were the only proper apparel. The torso claimed that a shirt ought to be worn. The hands disagreed, claiming that nothing was necessary, but that gloves were acceptable upon occasion. The members of the body began to quarrel with one another with the result that each member decided to withdraw from those other members with whom there was disagreement. In the end, the body died.*

---Story from [Pastor John Stevenson](#)

Sounds a little silly, doesn't it? Yet this simple story serves to illustrate why there are so many dying churches in the world today. Divisions in the church can be caused due to doctrinal disagreements or because of "clicks" that are developed. When referencing the church at Corinth, it was not divided because of doctrinal controversy but rather due to clicks that had been developed.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul writes, "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."

When the structure becomes divided it cannot function. Just as in the story illustrated above, the body dies.

Satan is constantly prowling around like a roaring lion looking for people to devour. He will look for ways to cause division with the Body of Christ (1 Peter 5:8). Satan is the propagator of sin, the deceiver of the whole world, and the father of lies. Jesus said of the devil, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Stand on guard.  
Work together in love as one whole,  
instead of competing as individual parts.  
When all the parts blend together correctly, Christ is revealed.