

A hand holding a glass of red wine on a tray in a blurred social setting.

A COVID RESILIENT BODY



westview.org.za

1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 27

One Body with Many Members

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honour to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Monday – A people scattered....



1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 *For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.*

2020 has taught us that the church is not a building, but a body of people connected by bonds that transcend physical gathering. During 2020 we have become the church scattered, each in our own home, worshipping online, together yet separated. This week we are going to be looking at how we continue to be mindful of and care for each other as we move towards 2021.

When the church scattered in Acts, they took the Word of the Lord with them. God used their fierce persecution as a means to take the gospel to places it had never been. Our current circumstance is an incredible opportunity for the gospel. People are coming face to face with their own mortality.

Now that we are at Level 1 and have more freedom of movement, how are we using our freedom to impact and care for others? Maintaining social distancing and wearing a mask is still vitally important as a way of caring for yourself and also for others.

Keeping our hands clean is important, but caring for one another is going to take far more than just these simple precautions.

How do we get this right? If we are going to take care of others, first and foremost we need to take care of ourselves. Have you taken your spiritual temperature lately? How are you doing? Are you reading Scripture, studying, praying to grow more Christlike?

Romans 12: 2 (ESV)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.



Dear God, sometimes I feel alone and disconnected from others. Help me to know that You will never leave me or forsake me and remind me that others may feel the same and need my care. AMEN

Acts 8: 4

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Tuesday – A church without boundaries...



Corinthians 12: 13-14 *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

“Jesus has called me to love my neighbour. There are vulnerable people in our congregation. The virus is real. If I wear a mask and I’m wrong, there is no harm. If I choose not to wear a mask people could get sick and possibly die. So, I choose to wear a mask as a way to serve, as a way to love, and as a way to do my part to protect the most vulnerable.” (Clergy Coaching Network)

What we do and the way we respond during this time of pandemic affects not only ourselves but has wider impact on the health and behaviour of other people. Saying that I am a Christ follower means that I am part of a body and have a responsibility to care for those around me whether or not they confess Christ as Lord.

We have a responsibility to one another when we worship together – if we know that we are unwell, we stay away. If we are well and gather to worship, we need to care for others in the congregation by maintaining our distance (this is difficult when we are used to giving and receiving a hug) and submitting

to having our temperature taken as a precautionary measure.

But more than this, God’s Word tells me that there are many other brothers and sisters who do not attend worship but are nevertheless precious to God and who must be cared for.

Philippians 2:4 NIV: "not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

Ephesians 1 : 22-23 (**The Message**) tells us that “*The church, you*

see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ’s body, in which He speaks and acts, by which He fills everything with His presence.” So everywhere that we go, we are the church. We represent Christ to our world and therefore our attitude towards others may influence them for or against Christ. What a responsibility! What a privilege! What a great joy!



Jesus, what a privilege it is to be a part of Your body, the church. Please give me the patience and grace to put others first in every connection I have so that You may touch lives through my actions and words.
AMEN

Wednesday – A healthy body



1 Corinthians 12: 27 *Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it*

The Latin saying “*mens sana in corpore sano*,” which translates to “*a healthy mind in a healthy body*,” is more relevant now than ever. New studies have tackled this subject, concluding that the duration and intensity of physical activity can undoubtedly improve cognitive agility. “The beneficial effect is probably related to the intensity of exercise.... it’s

ideal to exercise lightly to improve one’s capacity for learning and memory. Achieving a state of mental well-being and balance can help us generate the energy we need to be more steadfast in our goals, making it easier to have a healthy body. Mental health and attitude are key factors to having greater resistance, strength, and productivity.

Doing a routine of mental exercises in the early morning, the most peaceful and silent time of day, is ideal for starting to plan the day and strengthen the brain to increase mental agility. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the higher one’s mental agility and stability, the more likely they are to achieve and maintain a healthy body.”

Acknowledgement **Maren Schmidt-Kassow, professor Institute of Medical Psychology of Goethe University Frankfurt.**

A healthy church is also dependent on its members being healthy – so how do we maintain not just our physical health, but our spiritual health as a congregation?

Spiritual health is dependent on maintaining a daily relationship with God, prayer, reading and study. Time sitting quietly in God’s presence and allowing him to speak deeply into our spirit

keeps us connected to our Lord and Saviour.

The Contemporary English Version translates **Psalm 46: 10** like this: “*Our God says, “Calm down, and learn that I am God! All nations on earth will honour me.”*”

Connection with other Christians is also vital, the lesson provided by a coal taken from the fire and put aside reminds us that it is easy to ‘cool off’ if not in fellowship with the other members of Christ’s body. If in need, call someone, Khuluma has counsellors who are always ready to listen and help. Don’t do life on your own!



Jesus, as parts of Your body we need to be connected and healthy. Show us how to care for ourselves and one another so that we can continue to grow in grace. AMEN

Thursday – Let me be your servant



1 Cor 12 : 24-26 *But God has so composed the body....that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.*

We are in the midst of a highly teachable moment. There's no doubt that this period will be referred to for the rest of our lifetimes. We have a chance to go deep, and to go broad.

Globally, we're in this together. Depth is being forced on us by great suffering, which as I like to say, always leads to great love. I hope this experience

will force our attention outwards to the suffering of the most vulnerable. Love always means going beyond yourself to otherness. It takes two. There has to be the lover and the beloved. We must be stretched to an encounter with otherness, and only then do we know it's love. This is what we call the subject-subject relationship. Love alone overcomes fear and is the true foundation that lasts. Acknowledgement Richard Rohr

So, how do we go about allowing God to renew our minds through this time of pandemic? How do we learn to serve one another as a part of the Body of Christ? And what does this serving entail? 1 Corinthians 12 vs 12-27 tells us that each of us is a part of Christ's body

here on earth and that each has a specific gift to offer. We are able to discern what these gifts are by spending time in God's word, reflecting on those things we do

with and for others which bring us joy.

However sometimes we need to ask our friends which gifts they see in

us. Some may have the gift of communication – calling those who are unable to take part in large group gatherings and who are feeling lonely and uncared for. Others may be able to contribute to supplying food for those who are hungry. Some will be able to offer to do shopping for those unable to get about. The opportunities are numerous, Zoom connections and other forms of technology ensure that and each of us is able to play a part in making sure that Christ's body here on earth does not suffer and lack support.

Matthew 20: 28

“the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



Jesus, as part of Your Body here on earth, teach me to love, to serve, to protect the vulnerable and to walk daily with You. AMEN

Friday – Never waste a good crisis! (Winston Churchill) Lessons learned



1 John 4: 7-12 (ESV) *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ...

Galatians 6: 9 (ESV) says the following *"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*

This is not the time to give up!

This is not the time to leave our masks at home or to ignore the social distancing protocols.

This is not the time to stockpile goods when others are only able to afford enough for one day at a time. This is the time to be vigilant, to stay prayerful, to keep on keeping on! This is the time to stay faithful to everything that we know will help to keep this pandemic from spreading more and more.

This is the time to reach out to the lonely, to pray for our nation and her people, to love one another with a love that is patient, caring, thoughtful and kind. This is the time to spread the love of Jesus to everyone – those who will work over the Christmas season, those who will care for the sick, those who

will clear away the debris left by those who celebrate. This is the time to build our church, our nation and our world.

We have learnt valuable lessons during the period of hard lockdown and even since we have had more freedom of movement. Now is the time to put everything we have learnt into action. Let us not become weary of calling one another to prayer. Let us not become weary of serving, of giving, of loving one another.

1 John 4: 7-12 ESV

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.



Dear Jesus, You have brought Your church through this time of crisis, a time of learning, a time of leaning on You. We are so easily drawn by the freedom which the world offers, help us to find true freedom in You. Whether we are able to meet or not, keep us, Your body here on earth faithful to You and loving towards each other at all times. AMEN

