

## Week Four: Reimagining the Church

### Participant Sheet

#### Session 4: Week of October 13, 2024

#### **A Body with Many Parts**

***1 Corinthians 12:12-23a***

**Brewster Baptist Church, Brewster MA**

**Connecting** Turn to the person next to you and share what spiritual gifts you think you have and why.

#### **Background**

The ancient city of Corinth was considered the “gateway” between northern and southern Greece when Paul first visited there around 52 AD. Due to its coastal location, the city became a hub for both trade and transportation, with many individuals from many diverse cultures coming in and out of this bustling city. This presented some unique challenges for Paul when planting a church, which became evident soon after he left the city and returned north to the region of Macedonia. He received word from the disciple Pheobe’s household that divisions and quarrels had plagued the community (*1 Corinthians 1:11*), and the entire letter is largely a corrective to ensure that unity, even in the midst of diversity, is modeled in the Body of Christ. In *1 Corinthians 12*, Paul specifically talks about how, though all believers in Christ have received the same Holy Spirit, that same Spirit distributes many gifts for the edification and building up of the church.

#### **1 Corinthians 12:12-23a (NIV)**

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

## Questions

1. On Sunday, Pastor Nate told the story of Christopher Overton and Dimitri Kaspryzak, two men who changed the country, and many people’s lives, by mutually depending on one another for support, allowing each other’s strengths to compensate for their own weaknesses. For those of you who heard his sermon, what was your immediate reaction to this story? How did it strike you?
2. Pastor Nate thinks Brewster Baptist Church has lived into the image of the Body of Christ well historically. Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. *1 Corinthians 12:12-13* repeats the word “one” five times. Does your perception of the Christian church in our country and around the world largely fit this description about Brewster Baptist Church? Why?
4. Have you taken much time to identify your spiritual gifts? And if so, are you currently using them to build up the collective whole of Brewster Baptist Church?
5. Brewster Baptist Church has over 570 members. How many of them do you actually know and consistently communicate with? Is there a diversity of worldviews, backgrounds, and spiritual gifts represented in that group?

6. Do you struggle believing you have a gift to offer to help serve the church? What is your reaction to Paul's statement, "those parts of the body that seem weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor" (*1 Corinthians 12:22-23a*)?
7. At three times in his sermon, Pastor Nate used the word "compensate," and suggested that in order to be the Body of Christ as Paul suggests, we must allow our weaknesses to be compensated for by other's strengths. How does the word "compensate" make you feel? Are you comfortable with this word, or would you suggest an alternative? What would it look like for you to admit your weaknesses so that other people's gifts can effectively be used?

### **Closing Prayer**

Gracious, merciful, and loving God, we thank you for sending Jesus to teach and show how we're to live as your children. We ask for your help, which we desperately need, to live as Jesus commanded. By your Spirit grant us the faith and courage to help us be disciples who show mercy and grace by loving even our enemies, doing good to all, blessing, praying, and giving so your kingdom may be shown to the world and more lives transformed by the gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.