

What is the Body of Christ?

God expects us to related to one another so much that he placed scripture at least twenty different instances where we are command to do something with “one another.”

Twenty “one another passages”

Accept one another

“⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7 (NIV)

Admonish one another

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” Colossians 3:16 (NIV)

Bear one another's burdens

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

Bear with one another

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2 (NIV)

Edify one another

“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.” Romans 14:19 (NIV)

Care for one another

“so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.” 1 Corinthians 12:25

Encourage one another

“Therefore encourage each other with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NIV)
“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

Confess faults to one another

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16 (NIV)

Be Devoted to one another

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” Romans 12:10a (NIV)

Forgive one another

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Be Honest with one another

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices” Colossians 3:9 (NIV)

Honor one another

“Honor one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:10b (NIV)

Be Hospitable to one another

“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” 1 Peter 4:9 (NIV)

Be Kind to one another

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Love one another

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another” Romans 13:8 (NIV)

Be Members with one another

“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 (NIV)

Pray for one another

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16 (NIV)

Serve one another

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.” Galatians 5:13 (NIV)

Spur one another on

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” Hebrews 10:24 (NIV)

Submit to one another

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

Be united with one another

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus” Romans 15:5 (NIV)

In the light of these twenty “one another” passages there are seven characteristics of the Body of Christ that it is crucial that you understand and apply to your life.

There are seven important characteristics of the Body of Christ.

The first important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to connect with other believers.

“⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5 (NIV)

The second important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to be accountable to other believers.

As members of the Body of Christ we are to be honest with others in the body.

“⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices” Colossians 3:9 (NIV)

As members of the Body of Christ we are to submit our lives to others in the body.

“²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)

As members of the Body of Christ we are to open our lives to others in the body.

“¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16 (NIV)

The third important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to grow in our relationship with Christ.

“¹⁶From 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.” Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)

The fourth important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to be united with other believers.

God desires that we be united with other believers.

“⁵May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5–6 (NIV)

God modeled unity for us.

“¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.” John 17:11 (NIV)

Our acceptance by Christ through his sacrifice enables unity.

“⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” Romans 5:6–11 (NIV)

The goal of unity is to see people come to Christ.

“²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:20–23 (NIV)

The fifth important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to be motivated to live out our new life in Christ.

“²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24–25

The sixth important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to be able to serve God.

“³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴ Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” Romans 12:3–8 (NIV)

The seventh important characteristic of the Body of Christ is that it enables us to have a deep and abiding connection to other Christians.

Because we are part of the Body of Christ we can share in each others lives and needs.

We are able to share in each other lives.

“⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7 (NIV)

We are able to share in each others needs.

“¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.” 2 Corinthians 9:13

Because we are part of the Body of Christ we have a common purpose.

“⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now,” Philippians 1:4–5 (NIV)