

VERSES ABOUT THE BODY (of Christ):

Romans 12:5	1 Corinthians 12:27	Ephesians 4:16	Colossians 1:18
1 Corinthians 6:15	Ephesians 1:23	Ephesians 4:25	Colossians 1:24
1 Corinthians 10:17	Ephesians 2:16	Ephesians 4:4	Colossians 2:19
1 Corinthians 12:12	Ephesians 3:6	Ephesians 5:23	Colossians 3:15
1 Corinthians 12:13	Ephesians 4:12	Ephesians 5:30	

Summary:

[Prove the following summary using the above references, along with any others you may find.]

There is one body, made of many parts. We, though many, form one body. Each is a part (or member) of it. Some verses (in Ephesians) emphasize the fact of reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, because they both have union in this body. (This is applicable only to those who are "in Christ.")

Even our bodies are considered members of that body. The physical body is also used as a "teaching tool" to explain how the parts interrelate and are all equally valuable - though having various functions (1 Corinthians. 12).

This body is called "the church." Its head is called "Christ." The body is defined as "the fullness of Christ." Our entrance into it - and this is something we all experience in common (no exceptions) - is a work of the Holy Spirit: we are all "baptized" into that body by the Spirit. [Note: Study how Paul used the word "baptism" in 1 Corinthians, where this concept is found. This is not referring to a human activity of getting wet (although the two are not necessarily completely unrelated).] The parts are all joined and connected together, and joined to the head (this is a *must!*).

The body's strength and ability to grow comes from its connection to the head. Yet each part actively takes a part in building it up... each member doing its part. At times, this may require suffering of some type.

The members are called to peace. They must speak truthfully to one another (etc.). Each part belongs to the other.

Questions

Use the above verses... and any others you may find.

Note the connection between the various concepts, such as body, church and member. There is no such thing as a "member" of a "church" who *isn't* also a part of the body. There is no such thing as a part of the "body" who isn't a "member" of the "church" - *unless you change the meanings of these words and choose to disregard what the Bible says.*

How many bodies are there? Does the modern "church membership" concept promote this fact?

Who is NOT a part of this body? Who is? Who decides? ...and by what criteria? [What role do people have in deciding who is and who is not a part of this body?] Is there any other category of people?

Taking into consideration who is and who isn't a part of this body, are there people who *are* part of the body, who you do *not* treat as being so? Why? Does the Bible permit this? Are there people who are *not* part of the body who you treat as though they were? Why? Is there anyone you treat as belonging to some other category? Why? Evaluate each of your responses in the light of Scripture.

In any of these areas, do people rationalize doing things different from the way the Bible says to do it? What does the Bible say about this?

As far as the members are concerned, what are the obligations of the individuals? ...of the group? Is any of this optional? Suppose a person refuses to fulfill his obligations toward the group... what then? Suppose the group refuses (toward the individual)... what then? Give examples of how either of these is often done... and "justified" by those doing it. Does our concept of "church membership" permit this type of thing, or allow conditions which make it easy to happen? What does the Bible say about all this?

Do we live as though all the above verses are true? Evaluate and critique (as necessary) your answer.

How does one's concept of "church membership" encourage/enhance the things mentioned in the verses above, or take away from them? Explain. Evaluate YOUR concept of "church membership" on the above verses.

Conversely, what direct implications are there in these verses, as far as "church membership" is concerned. (Be careful to NOT read-in foreign, man-made concepts, in order to "find" whatever the current "church membership fad" might be.) What concepts/actions/attitudes/etc. are prohibited? ...mandatory?

Are there any verses which have been omitted, which should also be examined, to get a full and accurate perspective on this concept?