



## Let's Function!

Every member in the body of Christ has a mission, a function, at least one. Functioning in the body of Christ is much like functioning in a family. Every family member has a job to do, and others in the family grow to depend on that job getting done. If Johnny's function is to take out the trash on Friday and Tuesday mornings, and he does this, everything moves along smoothly. Let's say that Johnny gets up late on one sleepy Friday morning and doesn't have time to take the trash out before going to school. Dad's already gone to work. Mom can't lift the over stuffed sack out of the container so she can't help. His sisters won't from fear of ruining their nails, so the trash



gets free rent. It sits there Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and finally on Tuesday, along with all the other recently accumulated trash, takes a trip to the front curb and awaits its collectors.

What kind of impact did Johnny's neglect have on the rest of the family? Actually, quite a bit. The family trashcan sits on the back driveway, close to the garage door, and directly underneath the large, picturesque windows of the back sunroom. Johnny's family is six in number, so you can imagine the

amount of trash that can accumulate over the course of several days, let alone seven. For every family outing, all the family members get to squeeze by the pile of garbage on their way to the family van. When they return home, they get to do the same on their way back into the house. The kids love to play basketball on the back drive, except when the ball ends up in the pile of garbage. *Have you ever smelled week old garbage? There's nothing pleasant about it at all – nothing!* Mom wanted to have a patio get together with some friends over the weekend, and guess what they got to smell? Lot's of colorful garbage. The list can go on, but I'm sure you get the point. If

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Johnny doesn't function properly in his family, possible chaos can be just around the corner. *What if Johnny doesn't function at all?*

*Each Christian has a responsibility to do his or her part in the Church.*

When I say "Church," I am not referring to buildings of brick and stone. I am referring to the overall Church of Christ, a spiritual body to which you and I, as Christians, belong. In this Church, you have a function, something God-given, that you really are expected to do. Where you do this function is another topic, but for conversation's sake, let's locate your function within your immediate church or Christian fellowship.

The following section in Romans addresses our membership in the body of Christ. It lists several different functions.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (Romans 12:4)

A body is made up of many members, and this is true no matter what body you are talking about. For instance, your human body has lots of different members. Some of these members have functions that you may or may not be able to live without. That's how God designed them. *Your job is not to determine each individual function of each member. God already did that for you.*

Your job is to take care of each member so that they can function properly. We often don't care for our human members like we should. I just gave a talk to my son about having ear buds stuck in his ears all day as he listens to music. After lecturing him on the long-term disadvantages, I told him

that God designed the ear drum to receive sound from sources some distance away, but not two, three or four centimeters. I told him that he had a choice to make, a choice that would directly impact his "hearing" health in his later years to come. Each of us is responsible to care for our bodies so that they can serve us well, throughout our entire lives.

*During our exciting lifetimes, we learn a great lesson about our members. We learn that they were designed to serve us, as well as serve others.*

Just like all bodies have members that function together, all members are designed to serve in different capacities. It would be a sad state of affairs to spend old age without hearing, especially knowing that a choice in early life could have prevented the problem.

You may have been wondering where I obtained the biblical

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reference “function.” *“Office in verse four means, ‘functions.’* Each member has a different function, a different way of serving. Ears hear. Eyes see. Hands touch and hold. Feet walk. Legs support. Hearts pumps. Brains controls. Each member of your body works really hard. They all serve the greater function of life. Fortunately, God didn't give our members a brain. Can you imagine the chaos if each had a brain? Let's say you go to church and are sitting there listening to the sermon when, all of a sudden, your ears go on strike and say that they want to become the feet because they don't want to listen to the sermon anymore. *Instantly, you find yourself upside down with your ear on the ground as it is trying to walk out of there.* It would be crazy. If you imagine more of this, you can see just how insane it could become. Well, fortunately, God

didn't give every member a brain. Each member's function has been pre-determined and, if allowed to, will work just fine without any re-programming.

*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Romans 12:5)*

With so many body members, how do they all work together? The answer is quite simple. They work together as one. God knew what He was doing when he designed the human body. Without any effort on our parts, our body's members generally work together very well. When you wake up, you have never had to tell your ears to start hearing again. They know their job.

I've been referring to the human body as an example of the greater truths taught here, but it's time to switch to the spiritual body of Christ.

In the spiritual body of Christ, these same truths apply.

- Every member has at least one function.
- Your function is God-given and you are expected to perform it.
- The body of Christ is made up of many members, all with a variety of functions.
- The “brain-power” comes from Christ, the Head of the Body.
- You can live without some of these functions (but not very well).
- You can't live without some of these functions.
- You don't determine each individual function of each member. God already did that.
- You are supposed to take care of each member so that they can function according to their godly design.
- All functions in the body of Christ were designed to work together and provide a service.

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- All members are to function together as one.
- Since a member's function is designed by God, we can't change it. God can give us a new function.

With these basic truths in mind, let's learn what some of these God-given functions are.

Having then gifts [God given abilities] differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; (Romans 12:6)  
Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; (Romans 12:7)  
Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:8)

Let's list these functions:

1. Prophecy
2. Ministering
3. Teaching
4. Exhorting
5. Giving
6. Ruling
7. Showing mercy

You may have one of these abilities given to you from God, but if you don't believe, you won't manifest it. The body of Christ is filled with all such functions. Yet, they will never become manifest if the individual with the function does not believe to manifest the function. For instance, *if you have the God given ability to exhort others to a more worthy endeavor, yet you can't see yourself as doing so, you effectively aren't believing that you can and you won't manifest this function.*

The same is true for all God given functions. These are God given abilities that an individual must believe to operate if he is ever going to function. They are all given by the friendly willingness of God to man. They are all spiritual abilities, not human abilities. *Their design is that they are to become horizontal ministries, man to man, in the Church as the believers operate them.*

What must become absolutely clear is that "all members have not the same function!" These spiritual abilities are spread out in the Church according to the needs present in the Church.

Here's the list again, but with a bit more detail.

Verse 6:

- If you've been given the

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ministry of prophecy, then get busy manifesting by prophesying according to the proportion of your believing.

Verse 7:

- If you have another type of ministry, get busy ministering.
- If your ministry is teaching, get busy teaching.
- If you have an exhortation ministry, get busy exhorting.

Verse 8:

- He that gives forth in any kind of ministry let him do it with a very focused mind.
- If you have a ruling ministry, do it with diligence.
- If you have a ministry making you very adept with mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.

All of these “ways of serving” are spiritual in nature. God will tap into *some* of your natural abilities, but your natural abilities are not the focus here. The spiritual function is the focus and is what God lays on top of your natural abilities.

***They are all spiritual in nature, and they are all positioned within the Christian Church.***

The verses following Romans 12:8 teach proper conduct in the Church when operating these spiritual abilities. Take the time to read these in order to better understand how you are expected to behave while functioning in the Church.

We've learned some great things today. You definitely DO have a godly function in the Church of Christ since you are a member in the body of Christ. ***God gave you a function and He really does expect you***

***to belly up to the bar and start functioning spiritually.***

In order to do so, you must see yourself doing this function. Your function is already within you if you are already involved in a Christian group or body of believers. Your function is not something that you have to wait a lifetime to manifest. It's there, now! Ask God to show you what it is. Keep in mind that it will be some distinct way of serving, possibly as one of those listed above. Possibly something different. Also keep in mind that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, which means that he is the brain of the operation, not you and your function.

Remember Johnny? I asked a question, “If Johnny doesn't function properly in his family, possible chaos can be just around the corner. What if Johnny doesn't function at all?” ***What if you don't function in***

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*the Church?* Today, so many don't. What kind of chaos is evident due to this fact? What kind of order can you bring into the Church if you start functioning? These are questions that all Christians should ask.

Much love in Christ!

Jerry D. Brown