

EVALUATE YOUR LIFE

Are you a contributing member of the body of Christ? Are you actively serving God and sharing Him with others? Are you contributing to peace and unity within His body? Do you worship regularly? Take a moment to evaluate your life in light of these principles.

We are called to apply our gifts, training, abilities, education and skills to the tasks that God places before us. If we do this humbly and prayerfully, the body of Christ will function to its full potential.

The New Testament's motivation for giving is grace; giving is an act of worship in response to the generosity of God. You are to give, Paul says, "as God has prospered you." II Corinthians 8 and 9 teaches clearly, "He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." God blesses those who give with generosity."

Giving is a way to thank God for His grace and generosity. The question is not, "How much do I give to stay in the club?" or "What are the dues?" but "How can I thank God for my many blessings?"



BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

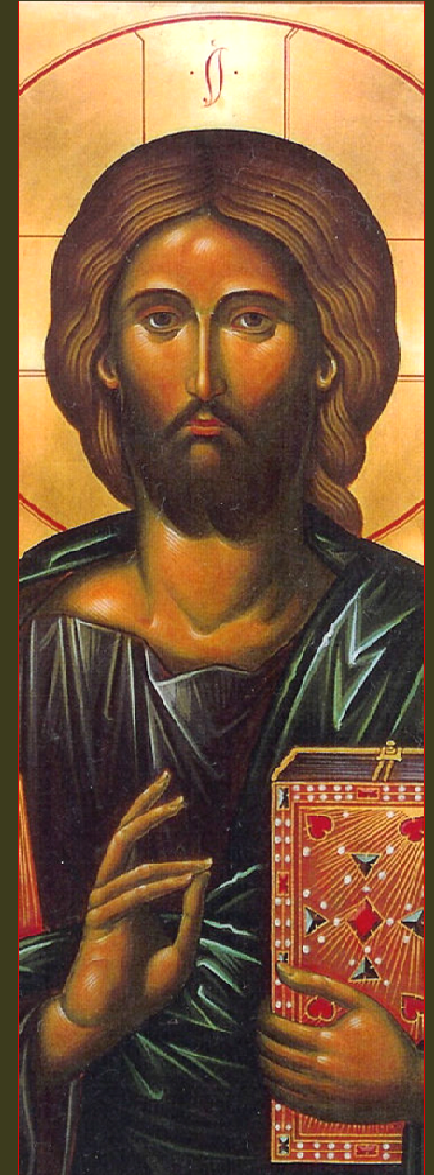
Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From 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.



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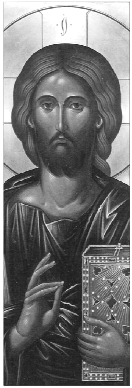
You are a Member of the Body of Christ



Come and See

“Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:27



To be a member of the Church is not the same as being a member of a club or civic group. The Church is the “Body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12). Therefore, to be a member of the Church is to be a part of the living body of Christ.

Just as every member has a different function in the human body, so do we each have a specific function or calling in His Church. God did not create each of us to do the same thing.

If a member of the human body is missing or not functioning, the entire body does not reach its full potential. In the same way, without all the members of the Church participating and working together, our ministries do not reach their full potential.

The Church needs not only to maintain its current ministries, but also to grow its ministries and add new ministries as needs or opportunities arise. Often new

ministries come about because one member has an idea and the gifts, talent, training, abilities, education and skills to make it a reality. Each of us is called to offer our gifts as we have been blessed and serve according to the task that God has placed before us in service to His Church.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Holy Scripture provides guiding principles for us as members of the Church for building up the body of Christ:

Promote Truth and Unity

In Ephesians 4:25 we read, "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

Use Our God-given Abilities to Serve

In I Corinthians chapter 12 we read of the importance of using our gifts to serve the Church. Your gift is unique and important. The proper functioning of the body requires that you use your gifts in service to God.

Regular and Cheerful Giving

In I Corinthians 16:2 we read “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his/her income.” In this way, we offer back to God’s Church the “first fruits” of our labor, realizing that all we possess comes from Him.

In II Corinthians 9:7 we read “Each person should give what he/she has

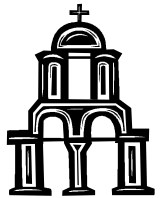
decided in his/her heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Keep in mind that the expenses of the Church increase every year. In order to grow our ministries, your stewardship contributions must also increase each year.

Let your life be an example to others

In chapter 5 of the Gospel of Matthew Jesus tells us that we "...are the light of the world.” He calls on us to let our “...light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Worship God

In Psalm 92 we read "It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to



proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night." We are healed by praying and worshipping with others. There is a great sense of community that gives us strength when we pray and worship together in liturgy. We pray for ourselves and others, and we thank God for the many blessings in our lives.

Love each other

In I John 4 we read, "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." And in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus tells us, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”