

The Church and The Body of Christ

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Football season has begun! Some of you will be headed to Levi Stadium soon for a game or two...some of you have season tickets...

In a football game, the offensive team does something before every play on the field--they huddle. The huddle is an important part of the game.

The huddle is where the quarterback announces the play to be executed.

We who watch football understand that the huddle is a necessary part of the game. The team needs the huddle. But that's not why we watch the game.

We watch football to see if what was called in the huddle will be executed on the field.

One important part of the Christian experience is that believers "huddle" together in church buildings. *That's part of what we do as the church.* We need to do that...no question... as much as the football team needs to huddle. "Do not neglect the assembly together." Says Scripture...

But... What does the world really want to see? Do they watch football for the huddle?

No. **What the world really wants to see is whether believers will execute in life what they huddle together about in church...**

A football team executes what they talk about in the huddle because everyone knows their position, and their part in the next play. And that is key...

As a church we need to first be convinced, that God has called each of us to be here, at WVPC, at this time, for a specific essential purpose. As your Pastor I believe that no one is here by accident. I believe that you are all here because God brought you...God wants you here. You have a unique and God-given purpose here. You are an essential part of this team called the church.

The only way to execute what we talk about here in the “huddle” at our church on Sunday mornings is if you understand and are invested in the vision and purpose of WVPC (as Bill shared earlier to get connected) and you are willing to get in the game. Otherwise, if its all about the huddle its pointless.

Hopefully in the next six weeks as we engage together in studying what it means to be a church member, you can figure out, if you haven’t already, what your unique contribution to this team, called the church, can be.

Maybe you are a running back, a tight end, a wide receiver, a quarter back. If you don’t like sports analogies, here’s the Biblical metaphor...

Paul describes the church as a BODY, which is a similar analogy. Like a team, the body has many members, and if one member is not functioning the whole body suffers. Just like if one team member doesn’t show up, sometimes you forfeit the game. The body is the same way...

Have you **ever had a toothache?** Your whole body suffers. You feel terrible. Your whole body lies down and rests.

Ever had **a sore throat?** Usually, your whole body feels droopy and exhausted.

Ever **break a bone?** If your foot is broken your whole body limps around – not just the foot by itself.

Its not like you can separate the one member of the body from the rest of it. They all function together because they are one entity and if one part of the body is not active, the rest are impacted by that inactivity.

Trevor has prepared a video for us that speaks of the importance of every part of the Body of Christ –the church – functioning, working, doing its part to help the entire group grow and flourish in ministry – to know Christ and make him known.

(Play video here 3-5 mins)

Do you see how the body functions, and must function together to be effective? How one member that is not actively involved impacts the whole organism. That's what happens in the church, and that's why so often are churches are not healthy. They are not healthy because we do not have everyone meaningfully connected and involved.

The book you are reading in the discussion groups after the worship service actually talks about something called an oxymoron. **An oxymoron is defined as *an incongruous, seemingly self-contradictory statement...***

Here are some oxymorons:

**Jumbo Shrimp
Small Crowd
Terribly Good
Working Vacation
Sad Smile
Loud Whisper
Random Order
Resident Alien
Minor Miracle
Plastic Silverware
Negative Income**

To name a few...these are all oxymorons. We accept these statements, and we know what they mean, but really they don't make a whole lot of sense when you take the time to think about it.

Do you want to know another oxymoron that churches chronically deal with and that really bugs me when it is used as a category for anyone?

Inactive church member

Being an inactive member of a church is the epitome of an oxymoron. The book you are going to discuss this morning in chapter 1 –is very clear on this; that the whole point of joining a church, or **becoming a member of a church necessarily implies that you want to serve the church and be active in its mission and ministry**; and this is qualitatively different from becoming a member of a country club.

Has anyone ever been to the Circus Club in Menlo Park? Its an amazing country club, but we, as a family, could never afford to be a member there. Its only for the VERY wealthy.

I remember one time I was there because Chris took lessons there and also he worked there over the summer for many as a tennis pro...but I was there watching him play and I wanted to buy a club soda. I was thirsty...it was a hot day...and the guy at the counter was very nice but he said “**I am sorry Ma’am... club sodas are only for members.**” Often Chris would be hungry when he was working there...but he well knew that he couldn’t eat the food there...because...it also was only for members.

So you can see how the word **membership for many** people **implies perks**. It implies benefits. I am paying my dues, and I oughta get something out of it....if not club soda, at least a ham sandwich.

But **Membership in a church is the exact opposite** of that. Membership in a church is not about what I will get out of it. Membership in a church, in the Body of Christ, implies involvement, connection, and most of all service. Not necessarily perks, but rather investment with others in a common vision – to know Christ and make him known. That’s why “inactive member” is an oxymoron...it really doesn’t make sense.

In fact because the word membership has that connotation ECO as a denomination doesn’t even call those who join the church “members”. ECO calls

those who join the church “**Covenant Partners.**” In others words partners in the ministry of sharing the covenant – God’s arrangement/agreement or promise with humanity for salvation through Jesus Christ.

We here at WVPC are still calling it ***membership*** for the sake of clarity and that’s okay. But I want to be real clear on this one. We don’t join the church for perks, or what we want to get out of it. **We join the church because we believe in its mission and purpose...to know Christ and make him known.** In order to accomplish this we have 5 core values that we try to act upon.

In case you forgot here are the 5 core values of WVPC...

Extravagant Generosity

Risk Taking Mission and Service

Radical Hospitality

Passionate Worship

Intentional Faith Development

As much as the football team’s mission is to get the ball down to the end zone, so the churches mission is to make Christ known.