



# Good Morning, Church!

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis, Founder and Executive Director  
The Academy for Small Membership Church Ministries

## ***We Are Part of the Body of Christ***

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis | January 01, 2023

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

~ I Corinthians 12:12-13

I am a white, married male, a member of the United Methodist Church, a citizen of the United States, and affiliated with a particular political party who lives and works in rural Kansas. However, none of the above makes me any more or less a member of the Body of Christ. Just as a person who is a member of another race, or faith, a citizen of another country, with a different political affiliation, living in an urban or suburb is any more or less a member of the body of Christ.

Jesus did not count one person better than another because of their skin color, where they lived, political party, or marital status. Jesus did not come and set up teams or clubs which would separate people from the Body of Christ. There were no tryouts to see who fit and who did not. It did not matter if you were a tax collector, married five times, or were Jewish or Gentile.

The body of Christ was not about competing to see who would be first because Jesus said, "The first shall be last and the last first." Nor did Jesus rank one person more deserving of special treatment than another because of how much money they had in the bank, the color of their skin, their

orientation, or if they were male or female. Instead, Jesus said, "We are to be a servant of all."

If we are part of the body of Christ, we are to celebrate when a person is successful and reach out and help those struggling in life. I know we live in a capitalist society with a strong belief in winning. Some people are deemed more important, because they are more successful than others, even though they rely on others to help make their fortune. We have turned games that helped us play together as children into a professional game, where only certain people can be part of the team, and one team has to win, and one has to lose.

The church is no longer imitated by society; instead, the church imitates society. Many small membership churches are more worried about surviving and being taken over by the large church than we are about sharing God's love. Some feel like we compete with large churches. However, Jesus didn't call us to be a team competing against each other.

Yes, it is time to remember we are the Body of Christ. When one person suffers, we all suffer, and when one succeeds, we all succeed. So for those of us who live in rural America, let us give thanks for the large churches that reach thousands. For those in large churches, let's rejoice in those small membership churches touching the lives of one, ten, twenty, and thirty people.

As the Body of Christ, when we see a brother or sister struggling, may we not worry about who they are, where they live, or how they got there but reach out to help them. Yes, we may be divided by boundaries, but we are all members of the Body of Christ. Every person is essential to the Body of Christ. We are not members of a team. We are members of the Body of Christ called to love God and our neighbor.



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