

Sermon Series: “Body Talk”—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—1/5/2003

Title: “Marks of a healthy Christian Body”

Text: Acts 2: 42-47

Intro.: *Ills.: Involved or committed*

Theme: The fellowship of Christian believers is a living body which devotes itself to acting as if it is alive and healthy.

*Ills.: four criteria for any living thing—growth, cellular interrelation, feeds itself, and reproduces itself*  
**Grow up!**

- That statement could be said in a variety of ways
  1. Grow up—stop being so immature (**Print and read Hebrews 5: 11-14**)
  2. Grow up—become more mature and stronger (“*Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.*” Eph 4: 13)
- The early Christians knew the crucial importance of growing up in their faith in a world hostile to their faith
  3. Multitude of religious “truths” that confused the simple Gospel of grace through faith in Jesus
  4. Persecution which rocked the foundations of faith
- Devoting ourselves to growing up in the “teaching of the apostles” is a training/retraining in God’s Word and its truth
  5. **Ills.: What makes a house a home—place where you dwell**
  6. Devoted to dwelling in word (Col 3: 16)—personal devotion, Bible studies, Sun. worship & Ed. Hour
  7. “Abiding” in Christ’s Word, knowing the truth, and being set free. (John 8: 31-33)

**Be Interconnected!**

- Through **partnership** in the ministry
  1. The sinful problem with most Christians’ “lone-ranger” mentality
    1. It rejects God’s call to us to gather for worship and service (**Print and read Hebrews 10: 23-25**)
    2. The collective ministry of the Church is left undone and people “unsaved”
    3. Individual Christians “singled out” by Satan and spiritually destroyed
  2. “Koinonia” = fellowship/common mind — give and take spiritually symbiotic relationship
    1. **Ills.: The rhino and the Ogolic Bird**
    2. “*Contend with one mind for the faith of the gospel.*” Phil 1: 27
- Through **participation** together in prayer
  3. Many times we neglect the power of public prayer together because of ignorance
    1. We don’t see its power because we don’t share the answers
    2. Afraid of saying the wrong words because we forget who we are praying to
  4. Christ’s powerful promise to our corporate prayer (“*I can guarantee again that if two of you agree on anything here on earth, my Father in heaven will accept it.*” Matthew 18:19)
  5. Intentionally employing the ministry of prayer among ourselves
    1. **Personal** – setting up a quick response prayer sheet (green sheets)
    2. **Responsive** – our e-mail prayer team (encourage to sign up)
    3. **Action groups** – forming of prayer warrior teams to covenant to pray for ministry needs that arise
    4. **Your church** – Lord of Life and leaders/staff; Lutheran Church-Mo Synod in crisis; world-wide Christian Church

**Eat!**

- **Ills.: Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer video clip of Mrs. Santa encouraging Satan to eat**
- Christians need to feed their soul and spirit to keep their faith and grace of God alive within themselves
  1. Early Christians did it through their AGAPE feasts in which they shared a meal and share the Lord’s Supper(42,46)
  2. We need to continue to fellowship about the “breaking of the bread”
    1. “The breaking of bread” was a synonym in early Church for sharing the Lord’s Supper

2. Congregational fellowship meals in which we feed our bodies as well as feeding the healthy fellowship  
**Multiply!**

- The early Christian church reproduced themselves by multiply their words and deeds for Christ in others
  1. **Shared and cared** for each others' needs which was **attractive to their world** (vss. 44-45)
  2. **Lived in joy and sincerity** which gave their witness to the life of Jesus **integrity among their association** (46)
  3. **Gained respect (favor)** of neighbors and so **captured their ear and commitment** because saw power of Jesus(47)
- Reproducing our faith in the lives of family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and community in 2003
  4. **Ills.:** We teach what we know; we reproduce what we are

### **Involved or committed**

What is the difference between involvement and commitment? Perhaps I can best explain this by way of analogy with bacon and eggs In bacon and egg, the hen is involved but the pig is committed

### **Acts 2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### **Hebrews 5:11-14**

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. <sup>12</sup>In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup>Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup>But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

### **Hebrews 10:23-25**

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.