

Sermon Series: “If we are the body . . .”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—July 16, 2006

Title: “Responsible and Accountable within the Family of Christ”

Text: Ephesians 4: 11-16

Intro.: *Ills.: One band/one sound (Drumline—20th Century Fox, 2002)*

Theme: Incorporated into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, we become involved in an intimate relationship, not only with Jesus, but with each other in which we are accountable to and responsible for the other’s spiritual well being.

Spiritual accountability within the Body of Christ

- Accepting the leaders which Christ places over us within the church (**Print Eph. 4: 11**)
 1. Christ gives us leaders so that they organize us around His mission and tend to our souls
 - a. Apostles – founders of our faith
 - b. Prophets — God’s truth tellers in our lives
 - c. Evangelist/missionaries — God’s search and rescue
 - d. Pastor and Teachers — the eternal soul keepers of our lives
 2. *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Heb. 13: 17*
- Accepting the role which God has us playing within the Christian family (**Print Eph. 4: 12, 16**)
 1. Neither diminishing nor inflating your role or importance to the Body
 2. God’s design for the local congregation is that we make ourself available w/o self-serving agendas or designs
 3. *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 1 Cor. 12:7*
 4. How are you or will you use your **S.H.A.P.E.** to benefit your fellow believers?
- Motivated by the Spirit’s purpose at work within the Body of Christ (**Print Eph. 4: 13**)
 1. **To Grow Together**— Whatever it takes to remain united
 - a. Not unity for unity’s sake but for the sake of our one faith and one witness
 - b. **Ills.: United Divided Church**
 - c. *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephes. 4:3-6*
 2. **To Grow Up**— not content to remain a midget in the faith but aspiring to be a giant of the faith
 - a. Measuring up to Christ is a pretty tall order (*measuring up to Christ, who is the standard. vs. 13*)
 - b. **Measuring up to his death** *For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Cor 2: 2*
 - c. **Measuring up to his love** *To know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Eph 3:19*
 - d. **Measuring up to his power** *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Phil 3: 10*

Spiritual responsibility for the Body of Christ

- Covering each other’s back against spiritual assault (**Print Eph. 4: 14**)
 1. Paul warns us that if we get cocky in our faith we are a prime candidate to be taken down by the **ENEMY**
 2. *Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Eph 6: 12*
 3. The blessing of having your brothers and sisters in Christ so intimately joined to you that you are not alone
- Being my brother’s/sister’s “keeper” (**Print Eph. 4: 15**)
 1. Our culture teaches us to mind our own business when Scripture teaches us to care enough to get involved
 2. **Ills.: The story of Cain and Abel** (“*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” **Genesis 4: 9**)
 3. Speaking the truth out of love for another’s eternal destination and loving them enough to say the truth
 4. It's nice to talk with people who can make a point without impaling anyone on it. **Vicki Edwards, St. Charles, Missouri**
- We are “joined at the hip” in Christ (**Print Eph. 4: 16**)
 1. “*Builds itself up in love*” vs. 16
 2. **Ills.: Looking out for each other**
 3. Making it your goal--your first impulse--to reach out first to those around you in the “*mind of Christ*” *Phil 2:5*

One Band, One Sound

The movie *Drumline* explores the maturation of a talented percussionist from Harlem who receives a full-ride scholarship to Atlanta A&T University to play in the marching band. Early on Devon Miles discovers that making the transition is more challenging than he expected. One morning, before sunrise, the incoming freshmen band members are lined up like Army recruits on the University's football field. The freshmen are all wearing white t-shirts except for Devon who is in a black one. Dr. Lee addresses them like a boot camp sergeant. When a few stragglers arrive tardy, the director asks one of them to identify his roommate. The embarrassed latecomer points to Devon. Dr. Lee approaches Devon and asks him why his roommate was late. He responds that his roommate likely overslept. When the band director inquires why he didn't wake him, Devon flippantly answers, "I'm not his mother." Dr. Lee, put off by Devon's smart mouth, repeats the dialogue he and Devon have just had loud enough for the entire band to hear. Then in military fashion he barks out, "Section leaders. What is our concept?" The section leaders answer loudly in unison, "One band, one sound!" Dr. Lee repeats the slogan: "One band, one sound!" and then continues to address the newcomers. "When one of us is late, we are all late. When one of us looks or sounds bad, we all look and sound bad." Staring at the freshmen, he asks, "So, what's the concept?" The freshman musicians reply, "One band, one sound." Dr. Lee continues, "Now I want ten laps from all those who are 'not their roommate's mama.'" Elapsed time: Measured from the beginning of the opening credit, this scene begins at 00:10:38 and lasts about two and a half minutes. **Drumline (20th-Century Fox, 2002), rated PG-13, written by Tina Gordon Chism, directed by Charles Stone; submitted by Greg Asima**

United Divided Church

Pastor, on the phone: "Bad news, Bishop. Our church-planting team is divided on whether to call the new congregation '*First United Church*' or '*United First Church*.'" **Cartoonist Ed Koehler, Leadership, Vol. 8, no. 4**

Looking out for each other

Philip Yancy in his book *Rumors of Another World* tells the story of his visit to the University of Southern Mississippi. While touring the campus with the university president, he noticed a towering male student, six-feet, eight-inches tall, holding hands with a midget coed barely three-feet tall. His curiosity piqued, he stopped to watch as the young man, dressed in a warm-up suit, tenderly picked up the midget, kissed her, and sent her off to class. The president explained that the student was a star basketball player. Both parents had died in his youth, and he made a vow to look after his sister. Many scholarship offers came his way, but only Southern Mississippi offered one to his sister too. Jackson went over to the basketball star, introduced himself, and said he appreciated him looking out for his sister. The athlete shrugged and said, "Those of us who God makes 6' 8" have to look out for those he makes 3' 3"." **Philip Yancey, Rumors of Another World (Zondervan, 2003), p. 204i**

Ephes. 4:11-16

¹¹He also gave apostles, prophets, missionaries, as well as pastors and teachers as gifts to his church. ¹²Their purpose is to prepare God's people, to serve, and to build up the body of Christ. ¹³This is to continue until all of us are united in our faith and in our knowledge about God's Son, until we become mature, until we measure up to Christ, who is the standard. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be little children, tossed and carried about by all kinds of teachings that change like the wind. We will no longer be influenced by people who use cunning and clever strategies to lead us astray. ¹⁵Instead, as we lovingly speak the truth, we will grow up completely in our relationship to Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together and unites it through the support of every joint. As each and every part does its job, he makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.(GW)