

# High Peaks Bible Fellowship

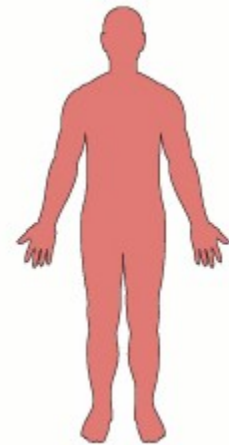
## Believers as the Body of Christ

### Introduction

- In the last session we learned that Jesus saw the church as something which was still to come in the future. Also, we noticed that the church could not begin until several things happened:
  - The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ
  - The coming of the Holy Spirit with a special ministry to believers
- We looked at the book of Acts, where in chapter one Jesus promised that within a few days the disciples would be "*baptized*" with the Holy Spirit.
- Then in chapter two we read about this special event which inaugurated the church.
- Now in this session we want to look at the special *baptizing* ministry of the Holy Spirit and how it functions to bring believers into the "Body of Christ."

### The Illustration of the Body of Christ

- The apostle Paul developed an analogy between the physical human body and the relationship between Christ and those who believe (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)
- This passage helps us answer the question: "How do believers become part of the body of Christ?" 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us that a special ministry of the Holy Spirit is what adds believers to the body of Christ. It was not something that the Holy Spirit did during the Old Testament period, but it was part of that new ministry given to the Holy Spirit for the benefit of believers during the church age.
- This new baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit was predicted in the gospel accounts (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33) and was promised by Jesus (Acts 1:5). It had its beginning on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2; Acts 11:15-16), and it was explained by the apostle Paul (1 Cor 12:13).
- This baptism by the Holy Spirit is a one-time experience that happens at the moment a person trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not something that the believer may even be aware of, but it is the action of the Holy Spirit that joins the new believer with the body of Christ.
- Later in his Christian life a believer may participate in the ordinance of water baptism as a testimony of his new faith to others in the community, but this is a completely separate action which is done by the hands of men rather than the Holy Spirit.
- The "*Body of Christ*" is identified as "*The Church*" in Colossians 1:18, 24. But we need to understand that the "Body of Christ" used this way refers to all believers in all locations at all times since the Day of Pentecost when the Church began. This is the universal sense in which the Church is made up of all believers everywhere during the Church Age. And that is the sense in which the Holy Spirit's baptism operates. Believers are part of something much bigger than a small local gathering of believers.



**The placement and gifting of the members of the body (1 Cor 12:7,11,18)**

- Notice that God is the one who is in control of which believers receive specific spiritual gifts for the functioning of the body as a whole. The body of Christ is a large body, spanning the globe as well as spanning a large time period since the Day of Pentecost.
- From this we can see that "membership" in the church is something that every Christian receives at the moment he believes. After that one-time experience, God then directs believers to use their Spirit-given gifts in different places and at different times, possibly within different local gatherings of believers.
- We need to keep in mind the distinction between the baptism of the Spirit and the ordinance of water baptism, as well as the distinction between membership in the Universal Church (the body of Christ) and association with a local gathering of believers in a local church. God will bring gifted believers together at times and places of His choosing.

Universal Sense	Local Manifestation
Baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit	Ordinance of water baptism in a local church
"Membership" in the Church	Association with a local gathering of believers in a local church

**The Responsibilities of a Believer**

**The primary relationships in a believer's life (Matthew 22:37-39)**

- As we think about the responsibilities of the members of the body of Christ, it is helpful to look at the main relationships in every believer's life. These relationships were summed up by Jesus in Matthew 22:37-39.
- We have a duty to love God as well as to love other people around us, including believers as well as unbelievers.



## A Believer's Responsibilities Toward God

Duty	Command
Worship	Romans 12:1; Philippians 3:3
Pray	Acts 2:42; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Peter 4:7
Seek God through His Word	Acts 6:4; Ephesians 6:17; Colossians 3:16; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 4:12, 13:7; James 1:22-23; 1 Peter 2:1-3
Give thankfully	Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Philippians 4:15-17
Celebrate the Lord's Supper	1 Corinthians 11:23-27
Be baptized	Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 16:15; 18:8

## A Believer's Responsibilities Toward Other Believers

Duty	Command
Fellowship & Caring	Romans 12:10, 13:8; Ephesians 4:2,32
Serving	Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 4:10
Giving	Romans 12:8; Philippians 4:15
Prayer	2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:17-18
Encouraging & Exhorting	Ephesians 4:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 3:13

## A Believer's Responsibilities Toward non-Believers

Duty	Command
Evangelism & Missions	Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11
Serving	1 Corinthians 3:5
Giving	Romans 12:20; James 2:16
Prayer	Ephesians 6:19-20; 1 Timothy 2:1
Apologetics & Speaking truth into the culture	Acts 17:17

### Overview: A Believer's Responsibilities

- If we look at the entire picture, we can get an overview of the responsibilities of a believer. One of the things we will see here is that responsibilities like those contained in the "*Great Commission*" of Matthew 28:18-20 were given to individual believers rather than to the local church as an institution.
- We often confuse the responsibilities given to individual believers with the functions we assume are the job of the local church with its paid staff. As believers we often abdicate our responsibilities to those we look upon as paid professionals, and it is wrong to do this.