

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# DEVO

SEPTEMBER 23 - 27, 2024

Romans 12-13

# PECULIAR PEOPLE

Sermon Series 9/8 - 11/24



# MONDAY

Read **Romans 12:1-5, 8:15**

## **Peculiar Communities ARE UNIQUE**

We should remind ourselves that the preferred definition of “peculiar” is not “strange” or “odd”; the dictionary says that its primary meaning is “to belong exclusively to.” There can be few terms more appropriate, therefore, to describe the people of God, whom Paul refers to as a “Body” (1 Corinthians 12:27). While all of us “belong” to certain groups, some by choice (a club, a gym, a church) and others without our prior approval (our family or our birth country/citizenship), our membership of the Universal Church, mirrored in our links with a local congregation, is distinctly different.

Firstly, we actually enter the COMMUNITY, not by the vote of the current members, but through our decision to turn away from the sin which previously linked us to other communities. This act of repentance opens the way for the Head of this Body to forgive our past and adopt us as “*His own children*” (Romans 8:15).

Secondly, we are accepted not because of any qualifications or merit, but because Christ opened the way to COMMUNITY by offering His own life for us on the cross. Jesus had to remind a rich ruler, who by human standards was “very good” because he kept so many of the commandments, that we can never in our own strength reach a point where we are good enough for heaven. So our Lord took our

sins on Himself and gave us His perfect righteousness in return. There is not a single person in our church community who “deserves” or who has earned the right to be a member.

Thirdly, we demonstrate our inclusion in this COMMUNITY by offering our lives in service to the body (Romans 12:1-2). This group is brought into being to serve and not to be served, which should make us one of the most close-knit communities on the face of the earth because we always long for the greater good of others and never of ourselves!

Finally, we demonstrate our COMMUNITY even in an event or sacrament that we refer to as “Communion” or the “Lord’s Supper,” when we recall what Jesus did to make it possible for us to become part of this Body. He draws us to Himself; but, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, He also draws us to each other as we function together for His glory.

## **QUESTIONS**

Are you a member of communities that honor God? How might you today glorify God in these communities?

## **PRAYER**

### **Glenkirk Men’s Retreat**

This year our Men’s Retreat will be held at Thousand Pine’s Man Camp. Pray for our men who are attending to be able to set aside the distractions of the world and focus on the Lord.

# TUESDAY

Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-30**

## **Peculiar Communities ARE INTERDEPENDENT**

Paul addresses the theme of the church as a body both in Romans 12 and in 1 Corinthians 12. In Romans 12 he makes the broad statement that we do not all have “the same function,” but he expands this considerably to the Corinthian church when he speaks of the different specific parts of the body, all being dependent on each other. Of all the analogies used in the Bible of the people of God, probably the one of a “body” is both the most appropriate and the easiest one for even the youngest child to understand.

However, it is the word “interdependence” on which we must focus, living as we do in a world of “independence.” We encourage our children from their earliest years to develop into the best they can be, with their own unique looks, talents, abilities and strengths, and there is nothing wrong with this in itself. Indeed, the God who gave each of us a unique set of fingerprints obviously intended us to know that we were created special with His own plan for us already in place.

However, this emphasis on individuality often becomes tainted by the sins of envy, or covetousness, or even hatred, as we try to prove that not only are we different from others, but we are better than

them. So, it may come as a bit of a shock to be told in Scripture that, if we are indeed “*one body in Christ*,” we have got to demonstrate to the world, absolutely genuinely, that we are a part of a whole, and our loyalty and commitment are to that “whole,” which is described as a Body.

Paul takes this a step further when he reminds the Corinthians that comparisons not only are odious but are completely out of order, since it is often the apparently “weaker” or “*less honorable*” parts of the body which perform some of the most essential functions. The most elementary understanding of biology reminds us that there are organs inside of us, which most of us will never see, without which the body would either have trouble functioning or would die completely. Even so, within the Body, which is the Church, we need to grant honor to ALL the parts, not just those who are highly visible and who play a very public role in the functioning of this community.

## **QUESTIONS**

What gifts and talents has God gifted you with ? Are you using them?

## **PRAYER**

[Glenkirk Men's Retreat](#)

Pray for the men at the Men's Retreat to be vessels that represent God.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **2 Corinthians 9-10**

## **Peculiar Communities Strive FOR THE COMMON GOOD**

As we continue the thought of being interdependent, it is good to be reminded that we are not just to “tolerate” the fact that we are interdependent, but we actually need to CELEBRATE it. Paul bluntly points out to the Corinthians that a body is useless if everyone is an “eye” or is made up simply of “ears” (1 Corinthians 12:14-20).

In fact, there are two ways in which we as Christians are, and must be, different. The first is that which God does, which is when He created us different from each other—the Bible makes it clear that we are to celebrate that fact. Of course, when we consider the millions of humans around us, we also recognize that, although just occasionally we meet someone who looks “just like us,” in fact the Creator had such fun ensuring among humans that there are no real “carbon copies”; we all are unique in looks, in ability, in temperament ... indeed, in so many ways. The apostle Paul says this very difference is “*for the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:7). All of us are able to bring something to the whole Body which would not be there if we were absent. Think about that for a while!

But then, there is a second area of difference, and this one is our own responsibility. We are called upon as believers to be different

from unbelievers. This time it will not be in looks, or ability, or temperament, but in the area of the spiritual. We are to stand out in the crowd as those who do not conform to the ways of the world, but who have been transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians that they must “*come out*” from the world and “*be separate*” (2 Corinthians 6:17). He certainly didn’t mean that we must form “holy huddles” that have nothing to do with anybody who is not a Christian. But what he DID mean was that our actions, our behavior, our ethical framework, and our language will all be noticeably different from the rest of the world. This is an ongoing, daily challenge if we are to glorify our Father who is in Heaven.

## QUESTIONS

Do I stand out as being “different” in the world because of my love for Jesus? Can I be “different” if I only live in Christ-centered communities?

## PRAYER

[Glenkirk Men’s Retreat](#)

Pray for the men at the retreat to recalibrate their priorities to align with God’s priorities for their lives.

# THURSDAY

Read [John 13:34-35](#)

## Peculiar Communities BELONG TOGETHER THROUGH MUTUAL LOVE

The Church is not like any other institution and one of the main reasons is that, as Paul stresses, “*each member belongs to all the others*” (Romans 12:5). We must be careful not to gloss over just how powerful this statement is, since the apostle is saying that our inclusion in the Body of Christ means much more than “joining the club”; it involves a sense of belonging which is not found anywhere else in the world.

Jesus, in His own inimitable way, told His followers that people would “*know that you are my disciples if you love one another*” (John 13:35). What exactly did He mean by that? The key is in the phrase “one another,” which involves mutuality. We don’t join the Body of Christ and become part of that special COMMUNITY simply for what we can get out of it—or we certainly should not! We should be willing to give self-sacrificing love to all within the Body, and especially those who are part of the little microcosm of the Universal Church, which is our Glenkirk where we worship and serve.

It’s interesting that “love” in Scripture is not primarily linked to emotions or feelings. It is an action, which is why outsiders looking at Christians should be saying to each other, as the early Church Father, Tertullian (160-225AD), is reported to have declared,

“See how these Christians love one another?” Now that would not have been because they hugged each other at church gatherings but, according to Tertullian, they were even willing to DIE for each other. What a testimony it is to unbelievers when the actions of Christians, especially in times of great need and turmoil around us, cause even the most skeptical observer to reach the conclusion that there is a mutual love here which goes beyond what is normal in a secular world.

There is a secondary challenge here within any local church, and that is for us to ensure that every person who comes through the doors should feel a sense of “belonging.” It is not just the responsibility of the team who welcomes people as they enter the building, but an attitude which all of us should seek to develop, giving everyone who enters that expression of love which tells them that this is a place where the Body of Christ truly functions well.

## QUESTIONS

Do non-believers see you as a model of love? How can you be a person who is inviting to others to belong the fellowship of Christ?

## PRAYER

[Glenkirk Men’s Retreat](#)

Pray for softened hearts and for growth for the men at the retreat.

# FRIDAY

Read **Philippians 2:3-4**

## **Peculiar Communities Have EQUAL CONCERN and RESPECT**

In a world of social media, an early observation is the obnoxious brutality of so much of it. Somehow, when people think they can take refuge behind the anonymity of a digital screen, the innate evil within us all too often bursts out into disrespect at best, and horrible, destructive criticism at worst. How terribly sad when we even see Christians sniping at one another because of political, cultural, or national differences, rather than adhering to the Biblical principles we have been considering about being part of a COMMUNITY designed to uplift and edify rather than denigrate and destroy.

Paul implies this concept in Romans, but actually spells it out to the Corinthians, insisting that there should be “*no division*” among us and “*equal concern*” for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25). We have already considered how vital it is that there should be mutual love shared among us. But if we take the analogy of a body to its logical conclusion, we will realize that if one part of that body is hurting or not working properly, it simply HAS to affect the whole organism! Think back to the last time you caught your finger in a car door, or dropped something on your toe! You didn’t just hum a merry tune and tell yourself, “It’s only my finger.” No, the whole body hurt because one small part was damaged.

How vital, then, that within the Body of Christ we need constantly to be alert to those who are hurting and are in need of comfort. They may not be yelling out, as we do when there is sudden pain, but there are other indicators that they need a kind word, an arm around the shoulders, a word of prayer.

If we are functioning as a community, we would learn when a home or hospital visit was needed, when a meal should be dropped off, or simply when an expression of concern would tell them that “someone cares.” People are lonely, hurting, and often even desperate; yet, because they don’t “cry out,” their needs are ignored. There is a real call to each of us as members of Christ’s Body to develop a sensitivity to others in the group so that, out of concern and respect, we can make ourselves available to be the “hands and feet of Christ” in their lives.

## QUESTIONS

How do I become active as God’s “hands and feet” in my community?

## PRAYER

[Glenkirk Men’s Retreat](#)

Pray for the men to be bold in their faith and bolstered by what they learn.



*These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at [KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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