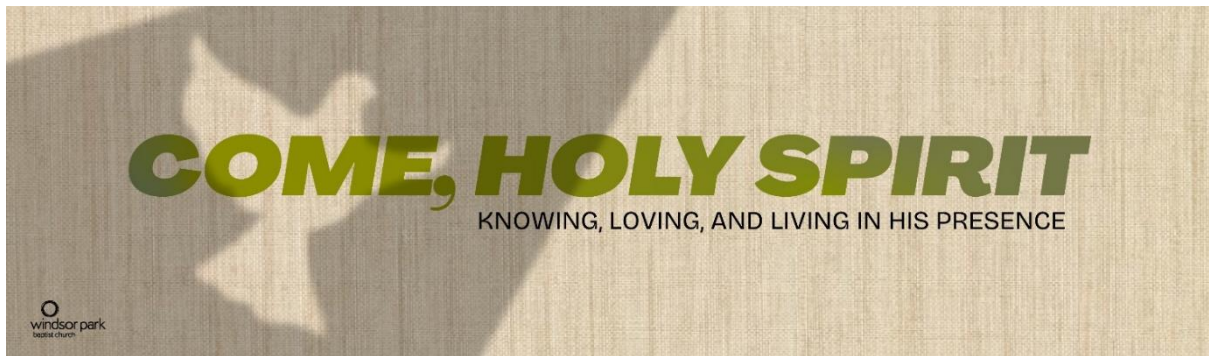


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Week 6: A Spirit Filled Community (1 Corinthians 12:12–31)

Key Idea:

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the image of a body to further illustrate the unique ways the Holy Spirit draws us into unity to bring about His mission – *“To build stronger communities by putting our faith into action.”* This means we must follow the Spirit's leading and use the gifts He has given us. We all have a part to play!

Introduction

Kia ora! My name is Caleb and welcome to our final week of our Holy Spirit series. Over this series we've been looking at “Who is the Holy Spirit” and hopefully coming to understand Him in a more intimate way. We've been studying from His arrival, His promise to be our advocate and focusing on the gifts He brings. Today, in light of the gifts that the Spirit gives us to glorify Him, we have Ann sharing with us her gifts and talents, and the unique ways in which she connects with God through the Holy Spirit - Ann will be using her artistic abilities to paint, while I talk.

We're wrapping up our series today and will be reading from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, ***“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body - whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the***

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sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

Hypothesis

At primary school I remember having to do a science fair. You had to choose a science experiment, document and display your process. I chose to do the “Memory Experiment.” You are shown an image or a tray of objects for sixty seconds, and you have to see how many you can remember and write down within 2 minutes after the fact. It was a fun experiment.

I thought we could have a bit of fun to start off today. We’re going to have slightly shorter time and we’ll do it with the person next to us. How many do you think you can remember?

Do experiment

How did you go? Did you get them all? Did you get ones that your partner didn’t?

The point of this exercise, in relation to our conversation today, is to remind ourselves that like the items shown, **our God does not change**. His Spirit, the one we have focused on these past few weeks, connects us to Him. But as humans, we are notoriously bad at remembering the Spirit’s work in our life.

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It's easy **not** to remember Him in our everyday, not to remember to seek Him first, not to include Him in our daily life.

However, when we do take time to remember the Spirit at work, how significant it can be for us! We recently spent time looking back on the 75 years of our church. In there we see story of the Spirit of God leading us, drawing us in and surprising us as a community. From people who were faithful and stepped out to start a church, a body of believers stirred by the Spirit to start a mental health service to our community, a people bold enough to buy a pub and tavern, and the list of how the Spirit has led us goes on. It is easy to see the Spirit in a linear manner, but He shows up in surprising ways!

It's like I say to our high school leaders all the time , *"Are we looking for where God is at work? If we aren't looking, we may struggle to find him!"*

How then do we look forward to the future of our church, our community and in light of our series what the Spirit of God might be calling us into for the next 75 years?

The Body as a Response

I believe that today's passage is a fantastic response to that very question. *"We are the body"*. And it is clear, there is no doubt about that, we are all unique. *"We all have our part to play."* Heather encouraged us about the different spiritual gifts we have. Grant reminded us how we are to act, in love. Yet stories of election year, COVID, global conflict and other such challenges cause us to forget what the Spirit is leading us too. The Spirit of God, who brings wisdom, who comforts us, relationally wants to connect with me and you. We listen to sermons about this, then we quickly forget when the topic of war and political views come into frame. We forget that we are all made in the image of God. We forget that we are the body of Christ.

I had a student from a local school come and interview me on Monday. He came in asking about my thoughts and the churches thoughts on poverty in New Zealand. *"Why does it exist and what is our response to it."* What was really interesting was that as I was trying to explain what we do, what we believe and who we are, there were moments where despite trying to remove all my Christian jargon, he seemed to struggle to get it. I tried to be as clear as possible, *"We believe we are all made in the image of God. We believe it is all our responsibility to engage with the challenge. We all have different gifts and talents. We are all called to play our part."* I was as expansive as possible throughout the hour

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conversation, our response to poverty in our world, but the language of faith made him like a deer in headlights.

Point being - the world around us is not going to encourage us to listen to or embrace the leading of the Holy Spirit and the gifts. We must realise the importance of the body image that Paul describes here.

A more excellent way

The same seems to be true in the story of the church in Corinth. The Church is thriving, the Spirit of God is leading and moving. But then the people forget. Hence why Paul is reminding them and us today, we all have a purpose, a part to play, and the desire of God's heart is we would all play our unique part.

The line that I believe is pivotal for all of our passage today, is the final line of Chapter 12. ***"Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way."*** Paul is modelling the heart and character of Jesus here. The greater gift He is referring to is **love**. And not only is he describing it to them, he's going to show it to them. Paul goes on in the following chapter about what this kind of love looks like as we heard Grant share about a few weeks ago. Love patient, kind, etc. Do we eagerly desire the Spirit of God to come and fill us, shape us and mould us by this kind of love? It's not easy, it may not be comfortable, but it is transformative, and it requires us to submit to Him through it.

What does it genuinely look like for us as a body of Christ, you and me, together, to each eagerly desire the gifts of the Spirit and to practically engage with His mission allowing it to change us and the world around us?

All have a part to play

A live story for us that has been unfolding over the last year and continues to unfold is one where Rachel and I felt the Spirit leading us to support and connect with a man sleeping rough in the local Bays. Rachel was the one to initially connect, with him while on her morning walks. What started with a simple *"Hello"* and extended to longer conversations. Over time we built a small relationship with Him and we continued to pray and intentionally seek God for how He would have us respond.

In our conversations we learnt a lot. One thing being that this man was desiring to get out of his current space of life, to get a job and place to live. We felt the Spirit continuing to prompt us in this space. After offering to have him around for dinner and to come to church with no success, after asking around for

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support with minimal success, Rachel posted on the Windsor community Facebook page. One person came through and was willing to help. They helped him to get a CV together, to get him into accommodation, and he has since accepted the offer to have a meal with them. The Spirit of God is moving in this guy's life. But not only that, He is moving in our lives too.

As a community we're able to be the body of Christ to him. We all have different parts to play, whether it's making an initial connection, helping to get a CV together, sharing a meal or praying. We're all important. A movement of the Spirit of God is not in a linear motion.

My question to you is who do we want to be as a church? Are we really willing to put our faith into action? Listening to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Will we give room to him, individually and collectively?

Unexpected spaces and places

But listening to the Spirit of God doesn't stop there or it doesn't only have to look like helping those experiencing homelessness. We have people like:

- Timani, writing music and making a clothing brand all led by obedience to the Spirit. To glorify God.
- Phil, who has just been made a lifetime member of ICONZ for faithfully serving the younger generation.
- Those who are on the creation care team and clean the cups after each service on a Sunday.
- Or the person who vacuums up after kid's church without being asked.

Here at Windsor you will often hear us say "*we build stronger communities by putting our faith into action.*" We say we are Christian, biblical, growing, innovative and generous. These all require us to listen to the Spirit, not to do it in our own strength.

It requires us to do it together. In the creation account we read, the only thing considered "*not good*" was for humans to be alone. We are one body, no part is more important than another. My calling as a pastor is no greater than your calling to be a teacher, engineer, CEO, or a stay-at-home Mum. The greater calling is to eagerly desire the greater gift given by the Spirit, to love.

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Check in with Ann

Ann can talk us through your image and what are some of the key aspects and elements going on here? *(In person response – a dove)*. Thanks for showing and modelling to us the fact that we can all embrace and worship the Holy Spirit in unique ways.

Let's do something about it!

So as our series concludes what are our opportunities as a community to respond? There are some very simple and practical ways you can engage.

Naturally Supernatural Course. A space to learn more about yourself, about the Spirit, to go deeper, explore more and stretch your understanding of the Spirit.

Serve day – We have Serve Day coming up on Matariki Weekend. As a Church this is a fantastic way for us to live out our calling to “*build stronger communities by putting our faith into action.*” You can check out the options and sign up on our website. Gather your Life Group and go all together.

Seek the Spirit first and allow Him to be your natural first response. As you walk into work, “*Spirit give me wisdom. Give me grace. Give me the right words to say. Help me love in a patient way*”

What's my response? I've been working on this over the last six months. As I walk home from work, I use it as a time to prepare for being the best I can at home. I have been getting into memorising Scripture, and as I walk home I repeat Galatians 5 to myself, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Against these things there is no such law.*” Then I repeat it again. But going through a different word, “The fruit of the Spirit is love” – what does love look like from me today? Or how will I be patient this evening etc. This is a small way in which I am trying to make the Spirit a default perspective lens in my life.

How could you seek Him and eagerly desire the greater gift that He gives you?

Let's pray.

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Reflecting on Sunday 21st June 2026:

Last Sunday Pastor Heather took us through the gifts of the Spirit. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Where have you used these gifts in the last week or where could you use it in the coming week?

The following questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

- Knowing it is easy to lose focus and forget the work of the Spirit in our lives, what story is currently shaping your life more than the Spirit of God?
- What might the Spirit of God be inviting you to step into that may be uncomfortable, inconvenient or feels beyond your capability?
- What would change in your life if you truly believed that the Holy Spirit was actively working through you to bring about His Kingdom?
- Paul says every part of the body is indispensable. Do you see yourself as an indispensable part of God's work, or do you tend to minimise your value? Why?
- What does putting your “faith into action” look like for you currently?

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we're better together** and **no perfect people are allowed**.

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email info@windsorpark.org.nz and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. In **The Bible Project** video study on the **Holy Spirit** – link:

<https://bibleproject.com/videos/holy-spirit/>

2. Windsor Park is running a group **“Naturally Supernatural”** to learn more and sign up here:

<https://www.windsorpark.org.nz/event/naturally-supernatural>