

# How the Church Works

*Ray Stedman*

## I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Ephesians 4:7-10.
- B. Paul is calling the church back to its way.
- C. The church never has a right to determine its own goals—the church is here because God put it here.
- D. It cannot immediately correct the wrongs of society, but it can demonstrate the power of Jesus Christ.

## II. The nature of the church.

- A. The most basic element is the unity of the Spirit.
- B. The Body of Christ is not divided.

## III. The function of the Body.

- A. The impartation of spiritual gifts enables the church to function in society.
- B. The power of the church today is not earthly power.
- C. The power of the church is in recovering the exercise of each person's spiritual gift.
- D. The church has forgotten that it is fundamentally a body, but it acts like an organization.
- E. Every member of the Body of Christ has a spiritual gift.
- F. The church begins to exercise its influence when everyone begins to exercise his or her gifts.

## IV. Differing gifts.

- A. The basic gift is the gift of Christ or the gift of the Holy Spirit—His indwelling in each believer.
- B. There is also grace given for the function and service of the Body.
  - 1. Gifts are often talked about today with reference to the gift of tongues.
  - 2. This grace means more than tongues though—it is all the gifts of the Spirit.
  - 3. A gift is one thing—the power to operate it is another.

4. We need a power independent of mood or feelings—the power of resurrection. (Philippians 3)

C. Resurrection power is the kind of power that pays no attention to obstacles and cannot be stopped or thwarted by any power of man. (Colossians 1:28)

1. Every gift is needed without exception.
2. We will be called to account for whether we have used our gifts or not.
3. No one else can exercise what we alone have put in the body of Christ to do.
4. We ought to build our lives around the gifts that God has given to us.
5. Let us conduct ourselves becomingly. (Romans 13)

**Application questions:**

1. How does the metaphor of the body demonstrate the value of individual Christians?

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2. Why are gifts ineffective independent of any power?

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3. What is your contribution to the Body? How can your gift out or develop it further?

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