

Apart or A Part **(Lift: Carried by the Wind of the Spirit – Part V)**

5/24/2009

1. The focus for today is on the role of the Holy Spirit in our belonging to a community of believers. Whether you call this entity a church, a family of God, or a body of Christ, the vision is that we are actively involved in a group of Christians who worship together regularly. To set the stage for this discussion, consider briefly the following:

A. What are some groups, clubs, teams, or associations to which you belong (outside of church)?

B. How do you know you belong to these groups?

C. Are there groups, clubs, teams, or associations to which you no longer belong? If so, what happened? Why did you leave? How did you know that you no longer belonged?

2. Pastor Steve described five different attributes by which we might know we belong to some group or community. Each starts with the letter “F”. What were they and give examples of each.

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

3. What do these attributes have in common?

4. Let's now turn to the passage in 1 Corinthians to see how the description of those who belong to the new Christian church is different from the above. Start with 1Cor 12:4-6 and consider how God is described in this three verses.

5. Read carefully 1Cor 12:7-11 to see how we receive the gifts with which God blesses us. How are the gifts allocated?

6. Read 1 Cor. 13:1-2 to see what else we need besides these gifts in order to serve God.

7. Now look at 1 Cor 12:12-14 and determine what all of this discussion is about.

8. So why did Pastor Steve say this body of believers was "not a collection of individuals"? How is that different from what is described in 1 Cor. 12?

9. How is all of this like a jigsaw puzzle?

10. Finish up the passage by reading 1 Cor 12:26-27. Individual churches are often called families of God. How do these verses lead one to that description?

11. Pastor Steve then described four new attributes that describe how we can know we belong in ways that are more internal attributes than the five presented earlier. Each of them starts with an "S". What were they?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

12.. Pastor Steve closed with the claim that whether or not we choose to “belong” is up to each individual. It is not up to the church to pull us in. Do you agree with that? Is it possible that we need to move prospective members through the five external attributes of belonging before they are ready for the four internal attributes? If so, do we need to be more intentional about incorporating them into our activities at first, so they begin to feel a part of our community? What does all of this say about trying to foster a culturally diverse church?