

## One body, many parts

### Notes on the Bible readings

- Paul's letter to the Christians in Corinth moves on from issues of worship to those of authority and service. Some people had been queuing up to speak in tongues, thinking that this gift was superior to others, though without the gift of interpretation, Paul simply describes it as 'holy babbling' – a rather useless skill that doesn't build up the community.

- To stop spiritual snobbery and help the church community fully grasp the idea of spiritual gifts, Paul uses the human body as an analogy. Just as the body has different members, such as hands, feet, eyes and ears, and is deficient without one of them, so he wants the Corinthians to understand that different people have different gifts. No one person can possess them all, but everyone makes an important contribution and Paul wants them to rejoice together in a sense of unity and cooperation.

- Paul's image of the church as the body of Christ is more daring than saying 'many hands make light work'. It implies that the presence of Christ is found in people as they exercise their God-given gifts, and that Christ's followers are trusted to represent him on earth.

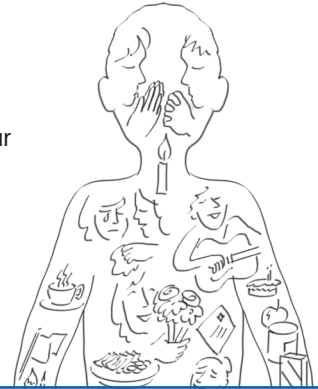
- In Luke, Jesus, as a guest in the synagogue, is invited to read and comment on Isaiah 61. He amazes everyone when he says that the prophecy about Israel's future glory, when the blind and sick are healed and the captives are freed, has been fulfilled that day.

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) and click on PostScript.



### Questions for reflection

- ▶ Can you relate to any of the roles or activities illustrated?
- ▶ What is missing in the image – or in your community?
- ▶ Whose contribution might need more affirmation?



### A prayer of thanksgiving

Father, thank you for loving each of us as if there was only one to love, and for calling us together to serve a greater love. Lord Jesus, thank you for becoming one of us in order to lead us to the unity of being members of your Church. Holy Spirit, thank you for our various gifts and roles, and the way we can work together in service. Amen.

### A prayer for others

Lord, we pray for those members of your body, the Church, who can't be with us here in this place today. For the sick, at home or in hospital; for those who are housebound because of old age or infirmity; for those mourning the death of a loved one; and for those affected by mental health issues that keep them from us just now. Please help them to know that they are not out of sight, out of mind; and please guide us to understand how to include them as best we can, to keep them in your circle of belonging, O Lord. Amen.

### A personal prayer

I pledge myself to play my part in your plans, O Lord. I immerse myself in the belonging of your body, the Church. I will not withhold the gifts I have, however humble, but serve willingly and well in the work of your kingdom. Amen.

### Live your faith

Help a member of the church community who may feel 'left out' (e.g. because they are housebound) to feel more fully included – for example, make a house or telephone call, or share something meaningful from this week's worship.