The Role of the Members in the Body of Christ

The body of man, as well as the body of Christ, has been designed in such a way that every part of the body serves the other. No member/organ lives for itself. *(As we have many members in one body and all the **members do not have the same function, so we… are individually members one of another. Romans 12: 4-5** For none of us live for themselves. Romans 14:7).*

The Church of Christ is structured as a Family, with infants, children and parents. We live for each other and grow to become like the Lord, to have the same heart as His *. (I write to you, parents, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 1 John 2:13)*

Christ is the head of the Family/Church and cares for it with love. *(For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the Church, because we are members of His body. Ephesians 5:29)*

The organs of the Body of Christ take care of each other, each living for the benefit of the other. *(God made the body… That there should be no division in it; but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer together with it. 1 Corinthians 12: 24-26)*

In the Body of Christ, we are closely connected with the members beside us, which in turn are closely connected with other organs, which are also closely connected with other limbs, and so the whole body is tightly bound and joined together. *(From Him, the body, tightly bound and joined together, by what each joint gives, receives its growth, according to the work of each part in its own measure. Ephesians 4:16)*

A very important aspect is that God, who designed the body, puts the limbs in it as He wills. We do not choose where to be in the body. He knows everyone's needs and what everyone can give. He will place each of us in such a way that we receive all that is necessary for our growth and perfection. *(But now God set the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He desired.1 Corinthians 12:18)*

If we are infants (*in faith*), He will not put us next to other infants, but He will put us next to older brothers/spiritual parents through whom we will be counseled and helped to get rid of lying, theft, anger, gossip, the use of useless words… (*Brothers, I myself am confident that you are full of goodness, full of all knowledge, and so are able to counsel one another . Romans 15:14)*

In this body, with every member being closely linked to other members, we learn to put on patience, kindness… to walk in holiness, to learn to forgive, to love. We start walking in the new

things from above, which are the things of the Spirit.

For this, the Lord places **spiritual parents** in His Family, to whom He entrusts His children to be raised and guarded by them against **predatory wolves.***(Be therefore on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God. Acts 20:28)*

They are made to be the servants of the infants and children. They must take care of all the members of the Church with an attitude of service to the needs of each. None can be left out. *(The greatest of you shall be your servant. Matthew 23:11)*

Just as the natural parents take care of all the needs of their children, so the spiritual parents/elders will take care of all the spiritual needs of the children entrusted to them *. (Like a nurse lovingly raising her children. 1 Thessalonians 2:7)*

- The spiritual parents will enroll them into the school of Christ, in which they teach them Christ's commandments. *(And teach them to keep all that I have commanded you. Matthew 28:20)* They will also watch/be careful that they grow healthily.*(Let us watch over one another. Hebrews 10:24)*

- They will give them work to help put the teachings of the Lord into practice in their daily lives and to distinguish good from evil. *(Those whose judgment has been taught to distinguish between good and evil. Hebrews 5:14)* In the Family/Church, children will learn to put off lying, cunningness, anger… to give up the old things, namely the things of the world. *(Colossians 3: 8-15)*

Following/imitating the example of the parents that overcome trials, the children will also learn to go overcome the tests of faith. *(Be fellow imitators of me, brothers, and consider those walking this way, even as you have us for a pattern. Philippians 3:17)* In the Family they will learn* goodness, kindness, mercy.*.. participating together with their parents in various works, by looking into the troubles of orphans and widows, by caring for the elderly sisters and brothers that are in need. This can range from small things, such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, to bed care. *(I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you came to Me. Matthew 25:36)*

Obedience

As in a natural family, to have a healthy growth, the children must be subject to their parents in all things. *(Likewise, young ones, submit yourselves unto the elder. 1 Peter 5:5)*

The pattern of obedience we must follow is given to us by Lord Jesus. He did nothing out of His own will. He was always obedient to the Father. *(I can do nothing of myself. John 5:30; he that remains in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:6)*

The Scripture describes obedience as a complete compliance to the Word of God, without turning right or left from it. *(According to the terms of the law which they teach you… you

shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left. Deuteronomy 17:11)* This is the only way to reach perfection, to reach the stature of Christ. Only if we obey our elders in all things will we be able to grow. *(Obey your leaders and submit to them , for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Hebrews 13:17; He gave some as… pastors and teachers; for perfecting the saints. Ephesians 4:11-12)*

The parents are those who correct and use the cane for the children that make mistakes. *(Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, scold, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2)*

To understand how serious disobedience is, we will highlight its consequences. In ancient times, the punishment for disobedience/insubordination to those considered worthy of leading was physical death. *(And the man who acts with pride so as not to listen to the priest who is standing to serve Jehovah your God there, or to the judge, even that man shall die; and you shall put away evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:12-13; see the rebellion of Korah and his people.)*

In the Church of Christ things are very similar. If a member of the body will disobey and rebel against those appointed by God as authority in the Church, he/she will have to bear the consequence of being removed from the body of Christ. *(If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a **pagan** and **a** tax collector. Matthew 18:17)*

Regarding the relationship that we can have with a pagan, it is highlighted by the Scripture in the words spoken by the apostle Peter in the house of Cornelius the centurion. *(…it is not lawful for a Jew to be with a foreigner. Acts 10:28)*

By the statement, *"Let him be to you as a pagan,"* Lord Jesus commands us to break all ties and isolate from the one who disregarded God's ordained authority, in order to avoid contaminating the other members with the sin of rebellion and disobedience. *(For they would turn your sons away from Me… Deuteronomy 7:4)*

Judging by what we see today around us, we can notice that Satan has worked hard and succeeded in abolishing the parental institution ordained by God, and replaced it with schools and preaching halls, giving man only institutionalized education, leading him to believe that he does not need spiritual parents for his spiritual growth. First, Satan worked to replace the spiritual parents/shepherds who are in charge of raising the spiritual children with preachers, servants dedicated only during the worshipping programs, that are in charge of institutionalized education and keeping the flock scattered, by no means helping the spiritual children grow. *(The wolf kidnaps and then scatters them. John 10:12)*

In this way, the church became only a center of religious education, thus losing its purpose of being the place intended for the growth of the saints. Therefore, whoever wills to be obedient as the Lord commanded will find himself/herself in the ridiculous situation of not having who to obey; this is because in most congregations today, there is a complete lack of spiritual parents.

We need to understand that we will not be able to grow towards perfection if we do not have spiritual parents to follow! *(For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15-16)*

It is good to understand the difference between education and parenting. Through preaching, we only receive the teaching, but no parental upbringing. We can see this difference if we compare the upbringing of an orphan child and one with parents. Both receive the education, but in addition to education, the child who has parents will have them be with him to build his character, to encourage him in good things, and to correct him in what is wrong. Instead, for the orphaned child, there will be no one next to him to correct him if he does something wrong.

We must, therefore, desire and practice obedience with all our hearts, since it is strictly necessary in the process of growth, to reach the stature of a mature man, the stature of the fullness of Christ. *(Ephesians 4:13)*

Let us not want to be in an institutionalized assembly, alone, like an orphan. Let us not avoid brotherly obedience, let us not run away from it. Let us flee from the assembly that does not practice obedience; the place that has no spiritual parents!

Q uestions :

- Do we have spiritual parents to take care of us? Or are we just an ordinary member/an orphan?

Comment:

- If we have spiritual parents, do they teach us not to oppose the one who hurts us, not to love the world, not to work illegally, to pay our taxes...?

Comment:

- Does he check us if we put them into practice, are we scolded if we do not? Comment:

- Do they watch over us so that something bad does not happen to us, so that we do not fall into sin? *(1 Peter 5:1)*

Comment:

- Do we give double honor to the spiritual parents? *(1 Timothy 5:17)* Comment:

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