

“Who Are We?”

Small Group Study

We all live by images that we have of ourselves. If we think of ourselves as sports people, then we involve ourselves in sports. If we think of ourselves as Christians, we might involve ourselves in Christian activities. If we think of ourselves as good parents, we will spend time caring for children. If we think of ourselves as surfers, we will surf when the swell is up (or not). If we think of ourselves as musicians, we will play and practice. The point is, what we think about our ‘identity’ shapes what we do. Of course, all of us will have a number of ‘self-images’ that we live by. And so there will be competing calls on our time as a result. Sometimes, we get too busy!

But what does God think of us? What ‘identity’ has he given us, if we are Christians? How should this shape what we do?

There are a number of ‘images’ that God uses to describe his people. In the coming weeks, we plan to look at four of these and see how each should shape the way we think about ourselves, and so, how we live.

1. “We are the Body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:27)
2. “We are the Temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 3:16)
3. “We are the Bride of Christ” (Revelation 19:7)
4. “We are the Children of God” (1 John 3:1)

Study 1 – “We are the Body of Christ”

1. Getting Started.

- a) Write down what you think are the key ‘images’ that you live by. If you have trouble working this out, think about the responsibilities you have taken on that shape how you use your time.

- b) Which do you find the hardest to manage? Which gets neglected? Which do you find fulfilling? Discuss in your group the possible reasons for your answers.

2. The “Body” image. One of the key images that the Apostle Paul has in his mind when he thinks about Christians is that we are “The Body of Christ”.

- a) Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and as you do, try and work out what problems in the church might have caused Paul to write using this ‘image’ (look especially at verses 21 and 25). Discuss how these problems might be evident in your own congregation.

- b) What is different about the various members of the body, from this chapter?

b) In what ways are you already serving the “Body of Christ” (the wider church? Your Small Group? Others beyond St Faith’s?)

c) In what ways do you think you could serve Christ’s body that you are not yet doing?

d) Discuss as a group whether you feel God would have you serve in some way together.

e) Pray about how to do this.

4. **If you have time** - trace how this image works in some of the other Letters of the New Testament. (See Ephesians 1:23, 4:12,16; Colossians 1:18,24; 1 Cor 10:17; and I think Acts 9:4 may have the same basis).

Consider what in each case is emphasized by the use of the body image. What does each passage say about how God thinks about us? How does that differ from how we usually think about ourselves or other Christians? Discuss.