Body Life

Some Christians at Corinth were exalting the gift of tongues as the preeminent manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Chapters 12-14 place tongues in the larger context of life in the body of Christ. Their message is this: protect the unity and diversity of the body. Why? Because—

**1. The *Theology* of Unity and Diversity** (1-13)

A. All believers have the *same Spirit* (1-3; 12-13)

B. Unity and diversity come from *the Trinity* (4-6)

The Spirit bestows abilities

The Lord assigns ministries

God empowers the work

(but compare vv. 6 & 11)

C. Diverse gifts are for the *common good* (7-11)

**2. The *Practice* of Unity and Diversity** (14-31)

A. Don’t treat anyone as *unnecessary*

B. Value gifts for their *usefulness*

C. Value people more than *gifts*

**Concluding Application**

A. “Nobody is too good for the *meanest service*”

Bonhoeffer

B. Nobody is too small to be used by a *big God*

C. Your heart is more important than *your gifts*

**For Private Meditation or Family Discussion**

Ministries from the chapter on ministry in *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

* The Ministry of Holding One’s Tongue
* The Ministry of Meekness
* The Ministry of Listening
* The Ministry of Helpfulness
* The Ministry of Bearing—“It is only when he is a burden that another person is really a brother and not merely an object to be manipulated.”
* The Ministry of Proclamation (from person to person, not by ordained pastors)—“The speaking of that Word is beset with infinite perils. If it is not accompanied by worthy listening, how can it really be the right word for the other person? If it is contradicted by one’s own lack of active helpfulness, how can it be a convincing and sincere word? If it issues, not from a spirit of bearing and forbearing, but from impatience and the desire to force its acceptance, how can it be the liberating and healing word?”
* The Ministry of Authority—“Pastoral authority can be attained only by the servant of Jesus who seeks now power of his own, who is himself a brother among brothers submitted to the authority of the Word.”

“A community with allows unemployed members to exist within it will perish because of them. It will be well, therefore, if every member receives a definite task to perform for the community, that he may know in hours of doubt that he, too, is not useless and unusable. Every Christian community must realize that not only do the weak need the strong, but also that the strong cannot exist without the weak. The elimination of the weak is the death of fellowship.”