

The church copier was just fixed - it took the repairman nearly an hour to get it working. The problem was just one relatively small part that needed to be replaced - one part that was located in a hard-to-reach place and that had to be installed in just the right way. That part is now doing its job, so the copier can do what we want it to do.

It's amazing: if one small part doesn't do its job, the whole machine fails to work. It happens in our vehicles all the time. One blown fuse or loose wire can keep the whole car from running. It happens in our bodies, as well. Bang your finger or your toe and you feel a pain that you can't ignore. Just one pinched nerve in your neck or back can completely incapacitate you.

In our lives as Christians, God wants us to think of ourselves as parts of a larger whole. God inspired Paul to write: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (I Corinthians 12:27). Paul goes on to explain that each one of us who believes in Jesus has a function to perform in the larger body of believers.

But what if we don't perform the function God has set in front of us? What if we remove ourselves from the larger body? Well, that larger body isn't going to work as well. What if you removed one spark plug from your car? Your car wouldn't run very well at all. It's the same with a Christian congregation. Each member of the body has a function. God means for each member to perform his or her function so that the body together can do its work.

We all have to admit that from time to time we fail to give our service to the larger body. We are sometimes unwilling to take direction from Jesus, the Head of the body. Thankfully, where we have failed, Jesus has always been faithful. Where we have been unable and/or unwilling to put the work of God's kingdom first in our lives, Jesus was always doing his Father's business. And his business, the work of saving us from our sins and imperfections, was completely perfectly when he died for us on the cross.

Let us, then, with joy in Christ's forgiveness, eagerly look forward to coming together week after week as a body of believers for service to God and to each other. It's what God created us to do.

Prayer: Almighty God, you made me just the way you want me to be. You give me opportunities to serve you and my fellow human beings. I must admit that sometimes my selfish side keeps me from offering true service, and I ask for your forgiveness. As I look at my Savior Jesus and all that he did for me, give me joy and strength to work for you so that my congregation may grow stronger and your kingdom may grow larger. In his name I pray, Amen.

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