

# **Body Life as a Lifestyle**

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## Introduction:

A. It is exciting to be involved in ministry today.

1. It used to be that the pastor alone reached out to an entire flock.
2. Today whole congregations are learning to share the Gospel with others.
3. A man told of knocking on a neighbor's door to no avail.
4. He left a note from Revelation 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock.
5. The next day someone left a note from Genesis 3: I heard your voice and was afraid.

B. My topic today is body life as a lifestyle.

1. One thing that body life encompasses is a whole lifestyle.
2. Our membership has caught on that body life continues in all encounters.
3. Some may say I don't understand that.
4. Well, it is not in Scripture but it encompasses all the one another aspects found in the Bible
  - a. Pray for one another.
  - b. Rebuke one another.
  - c. Love one another.
  - d. Serve one another.
  - e. Minister to one another.
  - f. Share with one another.
5. Though the phrase of body life is not in Scripture the idea is.
6. Leadership makes a commitment to the body and visa versa.
7. We recognize that we belong one to another.
8. We are members of one another.
9. God intends the body to function like this.

10. Paul often used the physical body as a symbol of how the church is to function.

11. I once sprained my right wrist.

- a. It was very painful.
- b. The rest of my body stayed up all night caring for it.
- c. When one member suffers the rest suffer with him or her.
- d. We need to minister to one another.

I. Today I want to talk of three things.

A. What is body life?

1. We have already discussed this.
2. We will move on.

B. How is body life taught and practiced?

1. Preaching is to uncover the deep mysteries of God that God ordained for our edification.

- a. The pulpit is where we state to teach about body life.
- b. Many preachers would have less difficulty by emphasizing the idea of body life in their pulpits.
- c. Preaching has an element of authority that no other element has.
- d. We need to overcome the deep ends of tradition by preaching the truth of God's word.
- e. Suggesting new methods that other churches are trying does not get results.
- f. We must exegete Scripture.
- g. This is liberating.

2. Modeling is helpful in teaching body life.

- a. Howard Hendricks brought out that certain people are ready to respond immediately.
- b. They will open their homes to minister to one another.
- c. The blessing of this will impact their families.
- d. Get them to share in the service what is happening in their homes.

e. If some have struggled through painful situations they will encourage others to get involved in a body life ministry.

1. I heard of a church that had a little girl was killed at a swimming pool.

2. The whole congregation had ministered to that family so that they survived the tragedy.

f. Our tradition of hiding to be OK is not a biblical model.

g. When we first began practicing body life at about church some resisted.

1. It is not easy to talk of financial loss, or rebellious teenagers, or illness, etc.

2. We began a body life service and some were reluctant to share.

3. We realized that the leaders needed to break the ice.

4. I shared about our daughter that lost her faith at college.

5. Some were shocked.

6. I shared little things about temptations to steal small things from hotels I visited.

7. A woman asked for prayer about the cold relationship she has with her husband.

8. Many commiserated with her.

h. Body life breaks down resistance to open up.

C. What results does body life produce in a congregation?

1. Body life teaches people to be comfortable with others who don't see things as they do.

a. We need to stop taking the spiritual temperature of ourselves and others.

b. When people begin reaching out to other Christians they also learn to reach out to non-Christians.

c. We listened to reports of people in the congregation and realized many of them began without knowledge of the leadership.

1. Some women began ministering to teenage girl that had gotten pregnant.

a. Two women started a crisis pregnancy center.

b. This ministry has grown to hundreds.

4. Others began ministering to handicapped children.
  - a. They take the worst possible cases.
  - b. I can hardly stand to see the poor children they minister to.
3. Another woman with an unbelieving husband continued to minister to her own family and began ministering to refugees.
  - a. They have needs of furniture and health care and English.
  - b. Now she has a dozen families or so to whom she ministers.
4. Another family met some Vietnamese people.
  - a. They have assisted 60 Vietnamese people.
  - b. They teach English and Scripture.
5. Another young man ministers to ex cons.
6. A nurse found that her doctors had surplus medicine.
  - a. She took the medication and sent them to Africa.
  - b. She found a transport company that sent the supplies free.
7. A former lesbian is ministering to the gay culture.
  - a. She knows how to talk to them with condemning them.
  - b. She is being effective in leading them to freedom.
- d. We need to bread the tradition of not getting involved in others' lives.
2. There are seven things.
  - a. Increasingly widespread involvement in the lives of others.
  - b. Excitement increases in the members of the congregation.
  - c. Needy ministries are taking place in our churches.
    1. Despair is growing in our culture.
    2. Violence and hatred is growing in our culture.
    3. Body life meets some of these needs.
  - d. Evangelism is occurring in greater effectiveness.

1. Not with artificial surveys.
  2. But with genuine concern.
  3. People are coming to Christ.
  4. People are being baptized.
- e. It lessens administration in the church.
1. People are being equipped to do the work of ministry.
  2. People are responsible to the Lord directly.
  3. Even if there are heresies among them praise the Lord anyway.
  4. We like to discuss with people issues of doctrine but we don't take a heavy hand.
  5. I have not known any group that has gone
- f. Spiritual growth and understanding is increasing.
- g. Church discipline is carried out in small groups.
1. Resistant people listen when small groups deal with them. (Matthew 18)
  2. Rarely do we need to bring an issue to the entire church.
    - a. One man was confronted about his homosexuality.
    - b. He left the church but went through psychotic hell and eventually repented.
    - c. We embraced him and rejoiced with him and had a party for him.
    - d. Now he leads a weeknight prayer meeting.

## II. Conclusion.

### A. The Bible commands to minister to one another.

1. Love one another.
2. Serve one another; pray for one another confess to one another; reach out to one another.

## III. Questions and Answers:

A. How does the church respond to help people minister to difficult people?

1. We provide counseling and support. Some people won't change and can't be helped but we must do what we can.
2. We have a girl that finds it difficult to trust the Lord yet she yearns for attention.
3. We have been very patient with her and she is beginning to come out of her isolation.

B. How does a church reach across cross cultural barriers?

1. Churches seldom function as corporate bodies, but as individuals.
2. We have tried to reach out to a black community near us.
3. Our corporate efforts were minimally be effective but some of our individuals actually joined their church and that helped a lot.
4. Through faith and patience we inherit the promises.

C. What small groups do we support?

1. We have singles, young married, and senior adults.
2. It's not helpful for a leader to organize a meeting; it's more helpful for individuals to organize such meetings.

D. Do we ever add these people to our staff?

1. Yes, six of our 12 pastors came to us in this way.
2. They are excellent pastors.
3. Some of them have made marvelous preachers.

E. How do we handle people that share gross immorality in meetings?

1. There are some sins that are mentioned in meetings but never in a lewd way. People don't brag about their former lifestyle.
2. If they do we gently say to them, "For a minute it sounded like you were proud of your former lifestyle, but we know you're not, are you?"

F. What do we do when people reach the age of 18 when professed Christians should live like Christians?

1. We need to love people.
2. We don't expose sin in order to disbar people.
3. We expose sin in order to minister to people.