

From Antagonism to the Common Good

1 Corinthians 12:4-14



Antagonism

Definition of “Antagonistic”

“showing or feeling active opposition or hostility toward someone or something”

CS Lewis

Each side hears not the best the other group can say, but only the worst

The tragedy of an auto-immune disorder

the body attacks healthy parts of the body as if they were the enemy

1 Corinthians 12:4-14

4-6:

There are **different** kinds of gifts,
but the **same Spirit** distributes them.

There are **different** kinds of service,
but the **same Lord**.

There are **different** kinds of working,
but **in all of them and in everyone** it is the **same God** at work.

7-11:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom...a message of knowledge...faith...healing...miraculous powers...prophecy...distinguishing between spirits...speaking in different kinds of tongues...the interpretation of tongues. **All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.**

12-14:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its **many parts form one body**, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so **the body is not made up of one part but of many.**

The Big Idea

**God has designed His Church
to be made up of
a diversity of people,
with a diversity of gifts,
in unity for the common good**

How do we breathe?

Inhale AND Exhale

“Antagonistic” muscles try to do opposite things

And both are necessary!

Healthy breathing: Deep inhale, full exhale

Unhealthy breathing: just a little of each

Without rich use of “opposite muscles”, we won’t be healthy

Opposite Muscles in the Church

What might be some “opposite muscles” in the church?

Without rich use of “opposite muscles”, we won’t be healthy

Application

“Our unity can be enhanced by appreciating the variety of gifts God has given to us”

Two bad approaches about God’s gifts

“My gift/perspective is the right one”

“My gift/perspective is not valuable”

The good approach

Appreciate the variety of gifts and peoples

as gifts God has given us

for our common good

Learn to work in harmony for common good

Let’s appreciate the variety of gifts and peoples as gifts from God

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. What are some of the ‘opposite’ (or antagonistic) muscle groups in the body of Christ? What makes it hard for people who naturally are a part of each of these groups to work in harmony?
2. What practices or perspectives or gifts are more natural for you? For example, are you more ‘word’ oriented or more ‘action’ oriented? Or do you tend more toward justice or more toward mercy? How would you describe the ‘opposite’ group (the opposite of your tendency) in a way that highlights how they are a gift of God to the body?
3. What practices help you to appreciate the expression of God’s work among people that might be pushing in the opposite direction from your own tendency?
4. Psalm 107:22 says: “Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.” When and where and to whom will you tell of God’s works that you have seen and experienced with songs of joy?