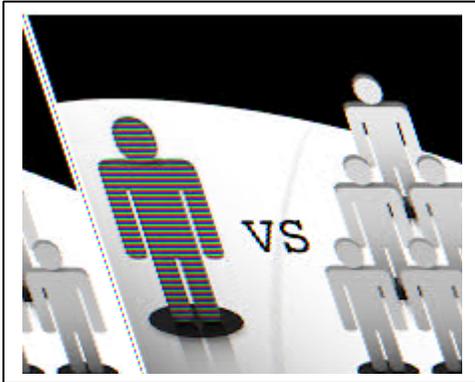


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**CORPORATE VS INDIVIDUAL, PART II**

In last week's bulletin, we discussed the concept of "corporate" mentality as it relates to unity in the body of Christ. The Jewish "tribe/clan/family" relationship was prevalent in the Bible. The Jews understood that they made up the Jewish "nation" but at the same time realized that as individuals they had to give up personal rights for the betterment of the nation as a whole.

As was suggested, the New Testament portrays the church as a body made up of individual members and each member has the responsibility of acting in the best interests of the body as a whole.

Paul addressed the subject of unity in the body of Christ in his letter to the church at Corinth. His plea was for them to agree with one another and be perfectly united in mind and thought. This would result in having "no divisions among you" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Paul goes on to place the blame of thinking more of certain men than they should as the cause of division. Implied is the idea of being swayed by the thinking of certain men more than being influenced by the word of God.

The body is made up of different members. The church is compared to a physical body with different members comprising the whole. Each member serves a different function, but each body part is essential to the well being of the whole body. This is why Paul urges his readers to agree with one another and be united in mind and body. This is the ideal situation. However, we also understand that not everyone thinks alike. We all have our own "perception" and "understanding" of certain things. When it comes to the word of God, there can be no differences in understanding. God's word settles any matter. But the problem is that most division in the church comes over matters of judgment and not matters of doctrine. Church splits often occur because one, and sometimes two or three, want to do something a certain way and everyone else thinks it should be done differently. The Bible is very plain in pointing out that when the majority of members think a certain way (that is scriptural of course) if we disagree, we must yield to the wishes of the congregation as a whole.

Paul puts it this way: *"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but to the interests of others"* (Philippians 2:1-4). Think how many problems could be solved if everyone followed this admonition. I may think my way of doing something is the best way (and it may be), but this passage says I have to yield to the thinking of others, especially when they are the majority. This goes back to the Old Testament concept of the Jewish "tribe-clan-family" relationship. We need to think and act in a way that is the best for the whole body, not just for our self. This means I may have to give up my opinion and judgment and yield to the thinking of others. This means that I cannot have "my way" all the time. This also means that I must put the interests of others before my own interests.

May God bless us with the comfort and fellowship that comes from unity with Christ and with each other.