



Small Group Discussion Resource

The Time is Now, 1 Peter 4:7-11

Serve Well!

1. What is your favourite home improvement show? When doing any kind of home improvement project, who do you go to for advice?
2. In 1 Peter 4:7-11, Peter is giving us instruction about how to build up the church, the body of Christ. Why would God use Peter to deliver this message? The church is not a building, but how is it “like” a building?
3. Read our theme passage together again. We have gone through this so many times in our teaching. Do any of you have it memorized? Give it a try.

⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰**Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.** ¹¹If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:7-11

4. Review these obstacles to serving. Do any of these relate to you? What other obstacles do you encounter when trying to serve?
 - Church structures – design and staffing
 - Busyness
 - I’ve been burned before
 - Bunny believers
 - *I am so tired and, in a season, where I just need to be fed.*
 - Selective reading of scripture
 - *My family is my ministry*
5. Walk through each phrase in this verse, 1 Peter 4:10. Share observations you have about each phrase.
6. Remember the “Pareto Principle”? Vilfredo Pareto, an Italian economist, discovered this pattern in many different spheres of life. The Pareto principle states that for many outcomes, roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes. Dream a little bit. What would our church be like if 80% of our congregation were actively involved in serving? What could we then accomplish together?
7. Read through 1 Corinthians 12 in the Message paraphrase (below). Share observations from this passage with each other.

Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful: wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.¹²⁻¹³ You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ.

...¹⁴⁻¹⁸ I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so? If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, transparent and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

¹⁹⁻²⁴ But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary.

You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

²⁵⁻²⁶ The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.²⁷ You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this.

8. Read through this cute story and share your thoughts.

"It wasn't too long after creation that the animals got together to form a school. They wanted the best school possible; one that offered each student a well-rounded curriculum of swimming, running, climbing and flying. In order to graduate the animals agreed that they would each have to take all the courses. The duck was excellent at swimming. In fact, he was better than his instructor, but he was only making passing grades at climbing and was getting a very poor grade

in running. The duck was so slow in running that he had to stay after school every day to practice. Even with that, there was little improvement. His webbed feet got badly worn from running and with such worn feet he would then only be able to get half his grade in swimming. Now average was quite acceptable to everyone else, so no one worried much about it except the duck. Now the rabbit was at the top of her class in running, but after a while she developed a twitch in her leg from all the time she spent in the water trying to improve her swimming. Now the squirrel was a peak performer in climbing, but was constantly frustrated in flying class. His body became so bruised from all the hard landings that he didn't do too well in climbing and ended up being pretty poor in running. The eagle was a continual problem student. She was severely disciplined for being nonconformist. For example, in climbing class she would always beat everyone else to the top of the tree, but insisted on using her own way to get there. Each of the animals had a particular area of expertise. When they did what they were designed to do they excelled. When they tried to operate outside their area of expertise, they were not nearly as effective. Can ducks run? Of course they can. Is that what they do best? Definitely not" Just as every animal has been designed uniquely for survival, so every Christian has been given unique gifts and talents to help the Body of Christ to grow. [an adaptation from a story from the book "What You Do Best In The Body of Christ" by Bruce Bugbee.]

9. Application

- If you are serving, how can you learn to serve better?
- If you are not serving in some capacity, why not? What is the obstacle?
- How do you think our staff would respond if you went to them and said – *I am reporting for duty?*
- Do you know all about the gifts of the Spirit in the Bible? Consider joining our discovery class on that.
- Please consider being a part of our next "On Mission" cohort. Our next "On Mission" cohort is starting Wednesday 16, 23 and 30. This is all about making disciples. How to lead someone to Christ and then how to help them grow in Christ. Wouldn't it be thrilling to be able to lead some of your friends to Jesus and then to help them become rooted and established in Christ? This learning opportunity is for those who are saying to themselves - I don't want to be a spectator. I want God to use me big time where I live work and play. Contact pastor Laird if you are interested.
- Right now, get on our church website and watch the video about On Mission. Here is the link - <https://the-campus.ca/onmission>

10. What is the correlation between Peter telling us "the end of all things is near" and serving well? Why is time of the essence?