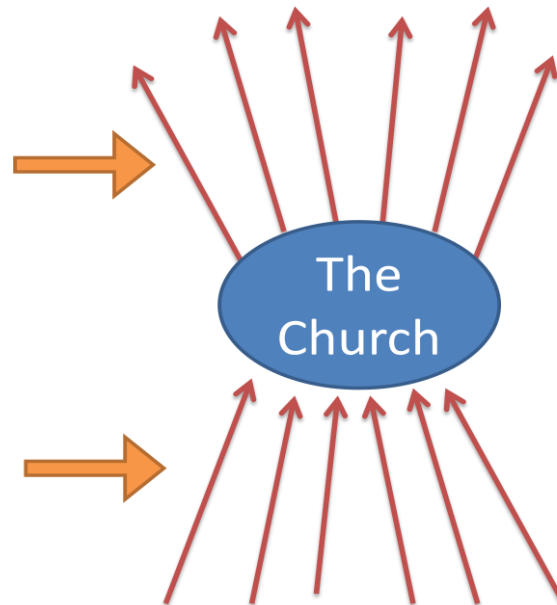


The Christian Relationship 1-27-13

Consider what the purpose of the church, the body of Christ, is: Ephesians 4:7-16 tells us that it is to equip Christians for good works. Now consider that the method of that equipping is also found in that passage, specifically "...joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share..." Ephesians 4:16b. We are told elsewhere (I Corinthians 12:22-27) that the body works by individual members doing their part. If we put this together, we conclude that the body of Christ equips individual Christians to their works of service by coming together as individual members each bringing their resources to the body. It might look something like this:



POINT #1: We MUST work on our personal relationships. Consider the New Testament church – they spent a great deal of time establishing personal relationships with each other. (Acts 2:44-47, Hebrews 13:1-2)

POINT #2: This CANNOT be the work of the church. It is not possible for the church to do the work given to an individual Christian. Can the church love my wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5)? Can the church serve my master as though unto Christ (Col 3)? Of course not. The church is neither equipped nor authorized to even try. Galatians 6:4-10; Romans 2:5-10

POINT #3: Salvation is (like) a TEAM sport. No, it is not the case that we will go to heaven either as a group or not at all. But the Bible is very clear that we have an accountability to God for one another. (Matthew 25:34-40). Think of it like this: What If Your place in heaven depends on (fill in the name of your brother here) getting to heaven? In closing, consider these words by the Apostle John:

We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. John 4:19-21