

## 1 PETER 4:7-11

## WE ARE THE BODY

<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it 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.

In a culture of rampant individualism we lose sight of our call to witness as a community. Yes, we are to be evangelistic in our individual lives, but we do so as representative members of Christ's Body, the Church universal. The focus of our evangelistic efforts is to be on the good of the Kingdom and our neighbors, not on our success as evangelists (e.g., our winning souls for Christ).

Various churches have developed marketing strategies that range from billboard advertising to providing culturally attractive modes of worship. One of the keys to successful marketing is alerting the public to something that is perceived as unique and attractive about your product. Although a topic for another day, isn't it interesting that churches try to market themselves by announcing their conformity to the surrounding culture? People exist in a self-absorbed world and are left empty by the commercialism and opportunities for self-fulfillment. The best strategy for the Church is to be the Church – a radically different community in which an individual can experience Truth.

The Christian community markets itself best when its corporate life is lived in obedience to God's will. Other-centered service cannot fail to attract the attention of the most self-centered pagan. In a world characterized by dog-eat-dog competition, where only one individual can be Number One, and that only for a short time, what can be a more obvious and attractive witness than a corporate attitude of love and service? The holy life is a life lived in community in obedience to the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ.

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms...[and if] anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

**Father, you have called me to belong to your family, the Church. As your child, direct my steps along the way that Jesus provided. Through faith help me to conquer the temptation to elevate myself in the eyes of others, and create in me a servant's heart so that I might serve my neighbors in love. May all that I do in your family reflect favorably on you, my Father. Amen.**