

## Your Call To Service

July 29, 2012

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7, 12-20, 27

*4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

*12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

*27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Elders, Deacons, and Board Officers are critical to the life of any church. Today, here at Hooker Memorial, this may be especially true. Several things are happening in the life of this church. Our numbers are declining. This isn't something new to any of us. I don't think it has anything to do with the different ministers we have had while I've been here. In the twelve or thirteen years I've been coming to church here, we have had four, five if you count me, different ministers. Les Wilkins was interim when I began to attend. Then we had Jerry Shavers, then Melissa Acres as an interim, then Jay White, and now me as an interim. With each minister, we lost some members and we also gained a few. We have lost a lot of members to death. When I began attending, we averaged on any given Sunday, 85 to 90 people. Now we average 60 to 65. If we continue this trend, we are going to have a serious problem.

In our scripture lesson this morning, the Apostle Paul is talking to the church in Corinth and trying to let them know just how important each person is to the life of the church in Corinth. In the same breath, each member of this church is vital to the life of this church. Paul uses the analogy of the different parts of the body and how each relates to the whole body. He also talks about the different gifts we each have to offer to the service of our church and ultimately for service to God. The temptation is to think however that there is someone more qualified than ourselves, or to think that someone else will be better at the job or that someone else will step forward and pick up where others have left off. We say to ourselves that others have more time, or we make excuses and tell ourselves that we don't have anything to bring to the table- that we have no gifts, no talents, passions or abilities and we have nothing in our imagination to inspire us to service. But the message we have to hear and repeat to ourselves is that all of us are equipped with gifts and passions that can be used to spread the message of the hope we have in Christ. Each person here has something important to offer to this church and to offer the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Once again we find ourselves between ministers. I am serving on a part-time basis as an interim until we can find an Intentional Interim. I am but a member of this church just as each of you. Today we as a congregation are going to install and commission a group of people to a number of offices in this church. Some will be Elders, while others will be Deacons, while still others will be Board Officers. These will be the people who will lead us into the future. These people have stepped forward and agreed to serve as leaders for Hooker Memorial Christian Church. I applaud each of them for doing so. The elders have already met, elected a chairperson and set a monthly meeting schedule. I will meet with the elders and we will be studying the book, **Your calling as an Elder**. We will be working together to help grow the spirituality of this church. Rick Owens has been elected as Chairperson of the Board. He and I have been talking and one of will call a meeting

for the deacons. During that meeting they should elect a chairperson, set a meeting schedule, and I will pass out to each of them the book **Your Calling as a Deacon**. Rick will get with the other board officers and set the meeting schedule for the board meetings.

Just because you are not an elder, deacon, or board member, does not mean that you are not to be an active member of this congregation; quite the contrary. As Christians, we each have an obligation to Christ. The Jews were promised a King, a Messiah. What they were looking for was a warrior king, one who would lead great armies in battle against their enemies. Instead, what they got, was a servant who preached love and forgiveness. They got a king who was a servant leader. To truly be a Christian, one must strive to be Christ-like. To be Christ-like, you must serve others. The people who are about to be installed this morning have agreed to be servants. Your job as a congregation and as Christians will be to help each of them serve.