

HEARTBEATS – Staying Connected

8/16/2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, August 17 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for the many places in the world that are in need of God's presence. Pray especially for Haiti as they recover from an earthquake and prepare for severe storms, and for Afghanistan and the many innocent people caught in the middle of the conflict there. Ask God bring peace and mercy to all who are in need and to provide faithful workers to bring God's comfort.

One of my favorite words in Scripture is the word translated either in the form “edify” or “edification.” It is a wonderful but powerful word that means “to build up.” Here are some of the occurrences of the word from Scripture:

- I Corinthians 8:1 – *Knowledge puffs up, while love edifies.*
- Ephesians 4:11-12 – *So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be edified.*
- Romans 14:19 – *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.*
- I Thessalonians 5:11 – *Therefore encourage one another and edify each other, just as in fact you are doing.*
- Ephesians 4:15-16 – *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and edifies itself, as each part does its work.*

There are really two directions of edification that work together. The first is building up the individual in both faith and in service. Helping each other to recognize their gifts and then grow in using them is an important part of edification. And then, in that use, the faith of the individual grows as well.

The use of gifts, especially within the church or through its ministries leads to the second focus of edification – the building up of the Body of Christ, the church. When individuals are encouraged, equipped, mentored, and set free to serve, the church as a whole also benefits. When one becomes stronger and more mature as a Christian, the entire church becomes stronger.

There are a number of things we can do to edify the church. Begin by looking at your own gifts and how you are using them. Do you have skills that need to be developed? Let the church help. Do you have gifts that are not being utilized? Look for ways to use them within the church and for the blessing of church ministries.

Look also to those around you. Do you see individuals who have gifts that are not being used? Help them to explore how they might develop these gifts in service to others. Is there someone who is going it alone? Help them to find someone to mentor in those gifts. Doing so not only will equip and edify another, it might also free someone to use other gifts to build up the Body of Christ. Be sure to praise those gifts and give encouragement so that others feel recognized and valued.

All these things and many more can help to bless and grow the church, which is the Body of Christ. Edification is one of the important goals of every Christian and every congregation.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey