

Listening to Jesus In One Another conference

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Aim: To function as the healthy Body of Christ.

Session 1 - Discerning the Body of Christ

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Do you think Jesus prays this for you?

Why? (Give specific examples where you feel you don't know what you are doing.)

What does your body look like?

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 built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Eph 4:11-13

Do you think that God has called you all to be joined in ministry in Liberia?

Do you think that God has called Andy and Stephen to be joined to you in ministry in Liberia?

Do you think Jesus wants us to function together as the Kingdom Apprentices team?

What purpose do you think Jesus has in joining us together as a team?

Which other Liberian churches do you think of as part of this same body?

How do you think Jesus wants us to view the people who do not share our vision?

Does it matter how we view these people? Why?

Who do you think of as definitely included? Why?

Who do you think of as definitely excluded? Why?

What attitude does Jesus want us to have towards those who are friends, or interested but not committed to our vision?

How does your body function?

There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and **in everyone** it is the same **God at work**. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the **common good** ... The eye cannot say to the hand, "**I don't need you!**" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"... Now you are the **body of Christ**, and each one of you is a part of it. 1 Cor 12:6-7, 21, 27

Who do you feel close to?

Who do you not know well?

What qualities do you see in others that you value? – Have you told them? – You should!!

Do you draw on their gifting? If not, why not?

Why would the eye say to the hand, "I don't need you!"?

In what ways does this happen amongst us?

Are there cultural barriers to getting help from one another?

Are there ways that Andy and Stephen could play a better part?

What is your dream for how the Kingdom Apprentices body could function?

What will you do towards fulfilling this dream this week?

Session 2 – Is the Body of Christ an Octopus?

The New Testament describes the people of God as the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12 discusses the functioning of the body with Christ as the head and us as His arms and hands and feet etc. But I think that the church more often looks like an octopus, rather than a human body. I think we are more comfortable with church as an octopus-like body than as a human-like body. Have we decided that an octopus is a better way to function?

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An Octopus is amazing!

- An Octopus is as intelligent as a dog.
- It has a higher brain-to-body weight ratio than most other animals.
- It has nine brains – one in the head and one in each arm.
- A cut-off arm can carry on catching food all on its own.

Is the Church an octopus?

(Think of each arm being one of the churches in our Life-for-Liberia group)

- Connected to the Head but not needing each other
- Each arm having its own brain
- Each arm doing its own thing
- Each arm looking the same
- Arms carry on just the same even when cut off from the Head

Does this describe how churches typically relate to one another?

What about within the Life-for-Liberia group? What about you?

But an octopus is better than we manage to be!

- Its arms obey the Head
- It coordinates its arms to achieve things
- An octopus will not eat its own arms!

- ... even if after it has been cut off.

Is this true of our Life-for-Liberia churches?

Is Jesus returning for an octopus?

Have we decided that Jesus will have to make do with an octopus bride? Are we prepared to change our thinking and behaviour so that Jesus has a properly functioning bride that reflects His beauty?

- Where is the other half of the Body (where are the women in this conference)?
- What is your dream for how our Life-for-Liberia churches could function as a true body?

(post your dream on the conference group)

- What will you do towards fulfilling this dream this week?

The most important words in scripture?

"This is My beloved Son. Listen to Him!" (Matt 17:5, Mark 9:7, Lk 9:35)

Do you really take this command seriously?

Do you pray with others to discern what Jesus is saying to you?

Session 3 – What are you dreaming?

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Dreams

- How fair is this picture?
- Do the relationships within the Life-for-Liberia group really matter to you?
- What is your dream for this octopus?

What do we need to talk about?

- Do you struggle to see value in your relationships with each other?
- Are there things that hinder your trust or respect of one another?
- What would make a difference for you?
- Is this dream worth pursuing?

Conversation Matters

"What kind of conversation are you having with one another?" (Luke 24:17)

- What do you talk about with your leaders?
- What do you talk about in your Life-for-Liberia team meetings?

We are a bit slow...

"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe" (Luke 24:25)

- What things have taken you a while to believe?
- What things have taken your people a while to believe?

We help one another believe

"He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27)

- Who could help you to believe?
- Who could help your people to believe?

Future Weeks

Each of us has valuable insights and experience that we can all benefit from. Over the following weeks I hope we can put what we have discussed today into practice and discover the voice of Jesus speaking to us through sharing and listening to one another.

Please ask Jesus if He wants you to share something with us. If so, please let me know so I can "book" you in. We have a very limited time each week, so I am suggesting you prepare beforehand and use the outline below to structure your contribution.

Once you have prepared (or beforehand if you like), I suggest you let me know so we can chat through your idea.

What is your dream?

What is the challenge?

What difficulties have you had as you tried to change things?

How have you addressed these difficulties?

What progress have you made?

What have you learnt?

What would you advise others to do?

You need to try to be clear and concise and try to focus on the things that you think will be the greatest help to those listening. You should invite questions and discussion, either as you go through or after you have shared.

After you have done your preparation, go through it and ask yourself, "How could this help my brothers and sisters to become more fruitful?"

Please feel free to ask Stephen or Andy (or anyone else) for help or guidance in your preparation.