The Body You’ll Need

(by Jason Hardin)

***"If one member suffers, all suffer together…"*** (**1 Corinthians 12:26**)

I’ve spent a lot of time in funeral homes in recent months. It’s been a heavy season as many I know and love have lost spouses, parents, grandparents, and children. There have been lots of tears. Lots of hugs. Lots of hard days and long nights.

But not one of these people I know and love has suffered alone. They are members of the body of Christ, and that fact has made an incalculable difference as they walk these dark valleys.

***"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body–Jews or Greeks, slaves or free–and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many."*** (**1 Corinthians 12:12-14**)

If the entire body were a thumb and that thumb gets smashed by a hammer, the body is going to be in sad shape. If the entire body were an arm and that arm gets broken, how will the body function? If the entire body were a foot and that foot can’t bear any weight, how will the body press on? ***“If all were a single member, where would the body be?”*** (**1 Corinthians 12:19**). Good question.

***"But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."*** (**1 Corinthians 12:24-27**)

It’s a beautiful, humbling, inspiring thing when you see God’s plan lived out by ordinary people. Just within the past few weeks…

I’ve had a brother in Christ recovering from open heart surgery ask me from his hospital bed how a fellow brother in a battle with cancer is doing.

I’ve seen armies of sisters in Christ provide and serve more food than a grieving family (and all their extended family) could eat in a week.

I’ve seen a brother in Christ drive more than a thousand miles to surprise and comfort his grieving brother in Christ at the funeral home.

I’ve seen teenage Christians rallied and organized to clean the house of a grieving family before their out-of-town relatives arrive.

I’ve seen brethren open their homes for as long as is needed.

I’ve seen anonymous givers cover extraordinary costs.

I've heard disciples sing "Amazing Grace" and "Where the Roses Never Fade" and "It Is Well With My Soul" as the grieving family on the front row couldn't muster a syllable, but were helped to feel the hope and conviction flowing from those hymns.

In every single funeral home I've been in during this heavy season, I've heard some Christian say, *"I don't know how people without a church family go through days like today."*

***"If one member suffers, all suffer together…"***

That’s not ever really on our minds when we spend an hour after an assembly of worship just talking and laughing and getting to know each other in the foyer or the parking lot, is it? We’re not thinking about future suffering when we meet for early-morning coffee, or a teen devo, or a small group, or Friday night pizza-and-a-movie with families from church. A future gathering at the funeral home isn’t on our radar when we meet the family who just moved to the area in their new driveway and help them unload the U-Haul. When we host a baby shower, or attend a middle school musical, or show up to cheer on the high school senior at his last football game, future grief is almost inconceivable.

But these are the times–over the course of months and years and decades–when ordinary people become “fellow members” who will be there, in the darkest times of life, to lift drooping hands, strengthen weak knees, and suffer together.

When the funeral home seems a million miles away, don’t take the small, ordinary, everyday relationship-building opportunities around you and your family for granted. Even then, God is composing His body. It’s a body you’ll need when the days are hard and the nights are long.