

Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture of growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

Doing Church Differently

There is excitement in the air on Sunday mornings as people walk toward a middle school in the heart of urban Atlanta, Georgia where Impact Church meets for worship at 10:00 a.m. and at noon. This United Methodist congregation was founded in 2007 and is living up to its motto of “doing church differently.”

As you enter the worship area there is a large screen with music, church announcements, and scriptures references to help people prepare for the worship experience. Two minutes before the worship hour a large clock appears on the screen and begins to tick down. When the clock hits the zero mark, the 80-minute worship experience begins. Worship is multisensory; incorporating dance, dramatic expression, contemporary music, spoken prayer, multimedia, and creative preaching.

Impact describes its atmosphere as casual, welcoming, and contemporary and says about itself, “we are deeply committed to the Christian faith and our Methodist heritage, but Impact Church may seem different than other Methodist churches. We mix a modern style with some of the traditional practices. We are committed to sharing the love of Christ with the world and reaching all people who want to realize their God-given potential.”

Another key part of Impact is its Connection Groups. These small groups meet all over Atlanta, in homes, parks, restaurants, and coffee shops. While a group may focus on a particular topic such as personal goal setting, marriage enrichment, or Bible study, all of the groups are intended to help people share with each other, grow spiritually, and make the community and world a better place.

Some Questions for Discussion

- If you asked people in your congregation to explain why your worship service is structured in the way it currently is, what would be their response?
- What three words best describe your worship service?
- How are you helping people relate to one another, grow spiritually, and make the community and world a better place?

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