

On the Outside Looking In

Scripture Reading — 1 Corinthians 12:12-20

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. — 1 Corinthians 12:15

Many years ago I attended a worship service at a Coptic Orthodox monastery in Wadi El Natrun, Egypt. We worshiped the same triune God who unites us to himself through the finished work of Jesus Christ. However, the people there used a different language from mine, and they stood up for the entire service. The priest conducted part of the service in front of a wall; then he passed through a door and served the elements of communion through two tiny doors in the wall. I felt out of place in that worship service.

Who are some people in your neighborhood who might feel out of place at your church? What would make them say, "I'm not like them, so I don't belong"? Some people may feel left out because they can't afford the kinds of cars they see in the parking lot or the clothing they see on worshipers. Some may feel left out because they are single and the church is full of young couples with children. Some may feel left out because they have made a lot of poor choices in life and everyone in the church seems to have it all together.

People who do not feel at home at a church "would not for that reason stop being part of the body." God placed the parts in the body just as he wanted them to be.

Prayer

Inclusive God, thank you for welcoming me into fellowship with you. Sensitize my heart to people who are feeling like out-siders, and help me and my church to welcome them. In Jesus, Amen.

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