

We have seen already how doing our best for Christ involves humbly recognising and submitting to God's will for us, God's calling for us, out of a motive of love and gratitude for God's merciful salvation. Here we consider our service to God in the church; how we can do our best for the Lord in the context of the church. This requires, first of all, that we recognise God's purpose and design for the church, and submit to this.

We see here three things concerning God's purpose and design for the church. First of all, God has designed the church as an organic unity, formed out of diversity – we being many, with differing gifts and offices, are brought into one body. This means that we each have our role to play, and all these roles are important. We are not to demean any aspect of service in the church, nor to think highly of ourselves because we have been called to a particular ministry (1 Cor 12:14-20). We ought not to think that we have nothing to do or to contribute – God makes no mistakes, and He has placed us in His church for a reason.

Secondly, we must recognise that Christ is the head of the church. We being many are one body *in Christ*: we are one body, only in Him. Any appearance of unity that is not centred around Christ, is not true Christian unity at all. This is important for us to remember, because today there are many who want the appearance of unity without truly submitting to the Lordship of Christ. We must therefore make sure that we abide in Christ, and must see our service in the church as service to Christ, not to any other. No loyalty can be allowed to supersede our loyalty to Christ.

Thirdly, God's design and purpose for the church involves the mutual relation of the members – we are members one of another. This means that we depend on one another; we are part of one another, in a sense. This again is a picture of organic unity: just as in the body all the parts have a mutual relation of interdependence, a complex intertwining whole, so also in the body of Christ. We ought to be *involved* in the church, not aloof and isolated. We ought not to despise even the apparently little opportunities that we have to exhort, comfort, and encourage one another – God can use these mightily for His own glory and purpose.