

# 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 in 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.

## Growing Spiritual Leaders

Dixon United Methodist Church in Dixon, California, has launched a leadership development initiative that includes spiritual formation, study, and reflection on ministry. Meeting monthly, over the course of nine months, leaders gather on a Friday evening and Saturday morning to read Scripture, pray, and discuss important aspects of congregational ministry.

This initiative involves twelve leaders and focuses on work of the heart, work of the soul, work of strength, work of the mind, and work with neighbors. Participants include small group leaders, members of the church staff, ministry team members, and other leaders identified by the pastor.

On Friday evening the group focuses on the work of the heart and the work of the soul. The pastor leads a process of discussion, reflection, and prayer. Participants also have prayer partners with whom they talk each week, sharing joys and concerns.

On Saturday mornings the group engages in learning around a particular leadership topic and explores implications for their ministry context. The Saturday session relates to work of strength, mind, and neighbors.

Each participant chooses a ministry area of the congregation as his or her focus for learning and leadership. Monthly group reading assignments relate to various ministry areas. For example, one month the group read *Recapturing the Wesleys' Vision* by Paul Chilcote. The learning sessions include help with planning and peer coaching. They also include an emphasis on developing culturally competent leaders, particularly pertinent in an area that includes a broad diversity of cultures and ethnicities. As part of this emphasis participants are encouraged to get to know someone they would not generally meet or interact with on a regular basis.

This leadership development process has led to deep discussions of faith, as individuals and as a congregation. Leaders value the support they receive in deepening their relationships with God, and they benefit from the group emphasis on leadership and spiritual formation.

## Questions for Discussion

- How does your congregation connect leadership development and spiritual formation?
- What leadership topics would be beneficial for your church leaders to explore together?

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