

# Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

## Children's Village

Produced by the Discipleship Ministries 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.

The city of Englewood, NJ includes many immigrant families from Korea who face the problem of balance between making a living and raising their children. Many times these families are left with no choice but to leave their children at home, unsupervised and uncared for while their parents are at work. Without parental guidance, the children are often exposed to unwholesome media and an excess of videogames. Many children go hungry while they wait for their parents to come home. Because of a language barrier, parents also face difficulties helping their children do their school work.

Recognizing the seriousness of these issues, the Korean Community United Methodist Church in Englewood established the Children's Village program to provide a safe environment for children to learn and grow within a biblical context. The church provides a pick-up service for students at twenty different elementary and middle schools around the county. The yearlong program is open Monday through Friday, running from after school until 6:30 p.m. There is also an extended care program that runs until 8 p.m. for children of parents who work late. The program also accommodates children on school days when there is an early dismissal or unexpected school closure.

The church provides children with a healthy meal when they arrive. The staff and volunteers help the children with their school assignments and provide personally tailored academic support for success in school. They also provide opportunities for children to develop their talents in music, athletics, or art. The program places a strong emphasis on creating an environment that encourages students to pursue their own interests and passions.

The Children's Village program is open not only to members of the church, but to anyone who is in need of afterschool care for their children. Many of the parents and children who enter this program have started out as nonbelievers. Through the program they are exposed to the Gospel and turn to Christ.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What opportunities does your church provide to meet the needs of your community?
2. How can your congregation impact the faith of people on a daily basis?
3. What ministries does your congregation have that build up the children of your community into faithful Christians?

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