

Dear Family of Peace!

Have you ever sat back and wondered about how amazing the members of your body are? Your ears hear. Your eyes see. Your legs walk. Your hands grab and pull. Each member of your body does something unique, something different from every other member.

I would simply like to share a couple of quick observations about how the members of our body work together. First, no one member of your body works for itself. Rather, each member of the body works for the common good of the whole body. Could you ever imagine your eyes saying: "I've seen all that I've wanted to see for today, I think it is time to stop working for awhile". Or better yet, your nose saying, "I've breathed enough air, I'm tired, and it is time to take a break". It is as if each member has agreed to do whatever is best for the others.

A second point to mention about how our bodies work together is this: each member shares its experiences with the others. Having a recent toothache put this idea into perspective for me. A sudden pain in my tooth made even my bones feel like they were aching and falling apart. Each member of the body is connected in a meaningful way—all celebrate together in success and all fall apart in injury and pain.

I use this image of our bodies because this is the exact metaphor the Scriptures use to explain how the Church works. I Corinthians puts it this way: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Jesus (and his bride—the Church)." I added the part in parentheses because the Church (the fellowship of believers) is what Paul is discussing in the broader context.

I share this with you because the next gatherings for Tables of Peace will address the gifts and abilities that each one of you possesses. The groups for these second gatherings have been formed and have been posted on the Bulletin Board at Peace. Please let me know if you would like to join but have not been assigned to a group. Important time will be given for you to take a questionnaire so that you can better understand the gifts and talents you have. For sure, many of you have taken Spiritual Gift Inventories before. But it will be important to take it again as your Spiritual gifts and talents have changed and developed as you have become older.

Better understanding our Spiritual Gifts is vital to the health of Peace. Better understanding your Spiritual Gifts is an important part of my pastoring responsibilities. When speaking about the role of pastors, Ephesians states: "God gave some to be pastors.....in order that they may equip the saints....." Part of the equipping process involves knowing gifts and talents.

By better understanding and organizing our gifts, the better the chance that we'll be able to be Jesus' hands, feet, eyes, and ears in the world—the body with many members God wants us to be.

Thanks for sharing your gifts and talents already at Peace. You do so much! I am looking forward to seeing even greater things in the future as we all partner together in the body.

In Peace, Pastor J

Dear Peace Family,

I am so thankful for the elders of Peace. On a monthly basis we gather for prayer and conversation about you—the family of Peace. Each elder deeply cares about the spiritual lives of every person in our family.

In case you were wondering, as children of God, our Peace elders take part in the following:

- Demonstrates a faith that has been tested and refined.
- Prays regularly for the family of Peace, the community, and for all people.
- Lives personal lives that are above reproach.
- Shows a deep commitment to the success of the congregation.
- Helps people work toward solving personal problems.
- Promotes harmony among members.

In addition to all of these activities and duties, Peace's elders offer oversight and assistance at our worship services. It is their duty with the pastor to ensure that the service is done in good order and that the administration of the Sacraments are done properly.

As many of you know, Elaine Schwartz recently became the first female elder at Peace. She is someone who has exhibited the qualities necessary to be an elder at Peace not just for the past few months, but for many years as she has served with a servant's heart. Thanks be to God for Elaine!

Recent discussions have taken place in elder meetings and small groups about Elaine distributing communion during Sunday services. The elders (Oscar, Bob and Elaine), Peace's Deacon (Larry) and I agreed that it would serve the congregation well to have Elaine distributing the individual cups on Communion Sundays. In light of these prayerful discussions, Elaine will begin to distribute individual cups on Sunday, June 1st.

If there are concerns about this practice, please find one of the elders, Larry or me and share your feelings, thoughts or concerns. It is important that we deal with concerns as well as the joys of ministry as a family.

With Great Gratitude,

Pastor J

Scripture Readings for June:

June 1: Acts 1:12-26; I Peter 4:12-19, 5:6-11

June 8: Numbers 11:24-30; Acts 1:1-21; John 7:37-39

June 15: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; Matthew 28:16-20

June 22: Jeremiah 20:7-13; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

June 29: Jeremiah 28:5-9; Romans 7:1-13; Matthew 10:34-42

Calendar for June

June 1: 8:30 Choir; 9:00 Healing Service; 9:45 Sunday School; 11 Worship

June 2: PL Day Off; 7 pm Bryson at Imagine Coffee

June 3: 7 am Philomath Pastor's Mtg at Nazarene Church; PL OH 9 to noon; 12 Rotary; 1:30 to 3:20 LBCC

June 4: 7 am Eat, Chat and Pray; 8:30 Staff Meeting; 9:30 to 12 PL OH; 7 Discipleship Class

June 5: 7 Men at Imagine Coffee; 9 to 12 PL OH; 1 pm Ladies Guild

June 6: PL OH 9 to 12

June 7: 8:30 Men's Breakfast

June 8: Pentecost Sunday: 8:30 Choir; 9:45 Sunday School; 11 Worship/Confirmation; Church picnic; Bryson Skaar Recital

June 9: PL Day Off; 7 pm Bryson at Imagine Coffee

June 10: Lutheran Circuit Pastor's Mtg (PL not in Office); 12 Rotary

June 11: 7 am Eat, Chat and Pray; 9 to 12 PL OH; 4 pm elder's meeting

June 12: 7 am Men at Imagine Coffee; 9 to 12 PL OH

June 13: PL OH 9 to noon; 6 Game Night

June 14:

June 15: Father's Day and New Summer Worship Schedule Begins; 8:30 Bible Study; 9:30 Worship

June 16: PL Day Off; 7 pm Bryson at Imagine Coffee

June 17: 8:00 am Prayer with Philomath Pastors; 9 to noon PL OH; 12 Rotary; 1:30 to 3:30 Guild at June's Kids Kloset; 3 pm National Night Out Meeting at Jean Worth's; 7 pm Council

June 18: 7 am Eat, Chat and Pray; 9 to noon PL OH

June 19: 7 am Men at Imagine Coffee; 9 to 12 PL OH

June 20: PL OH 9 to 12

June 21:

June 22: 8:30 Bible Study; 9:30 Worship (Articles due for July's Newsletter)

June 23: PL day off; 7 pm Bryson at Imagine Coffee

June 24: 8 am Prayer with Philomath Pastors; 9 to 12 PL OH; 12 Rotary

June 25: 7 am Eat, Chat and Pray; 9 to 12 PL OH

June 26: 7 am Men at Imagine Coffee; 9 to 12 PL OH

June 27: PL OH 9 to 12

June 28:

June 29: 8:30 Bible Study; 9:30 Worship

June 30: PL Day Off; 7 pm Bryson at Imagine Coffee

Attention Thrivent Members: If you have received a notice that you have Thrivent Choice dollars to direct to the church or institution of your choice, please remember that it must be done by May 31st. You can do this on the computer or by phoning Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836.

Men's Breakfast: Mark your calendar for the Peace First Saturday Breakfast June 7th. This will be the last breakfast until October 4th. Pastor Dan Hallgrimson will be speaking to us about the homeless situation in Benton County. See his back ground information below. Remember coffee on at 8:15 and breakfast at 8:30, with the special topic from 9 – 10. Do plan to attend.

“Challenges of Homelessness”

Dan Hallgrimson will be our breakfast speaker on June 7. His theme will be the “Challenges of Homelessness and Working with the Homeless” He has worked with the homeless in Corvallis for 20 years. Presently, he is the chair of the Corvallis Homeless Shelter Coalition (CHSC) which operates the men's cold weather shelter; Partner's Place, a housing first transitional housing

facility; and WRAP, a women's rent assistance program. He serves on the Homeless Oversight Committee, which brings together representatives of governmental and private non-profit organizations agencies to monitor progress on achieving goals as set forth in the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. He also is on call to help out at the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center (CDDC). He is on a steering committee that has brought together representatives of the CHSC, CDDC, and Stone Soup with the goal of combining the activities of those three organizations in one facility that is in the design process. In addition, Dan officiates at funerals for the homeless or formerly homeless. Dan is a retired Lutheran pastor who served congregations in Corvallis, Eugene, and Gresham, and is presently Pastor in Residence at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Willamina, Oregon.

Catherine Woodiwiss is Associate Web Editor at *Sojourners*. Find her on Twitter @chwoodiwiss. This piece originally appeared in *Catapult* magazine's January issue, **Ten Things**.

I wasn't really expecting painful things to happen to *me*.

I knew that pain was a part of life, but — thanks in part to a peculiar blend of “God-has-a-plan” Southern roots, a suburban “Midwestern nice” upbringing, and a higher education in New England stoicism — I managed to skate by for quite some time without having to experience it.

After a handful of traumas in the last five years, things look different now. Trauma upends everything we took for granted, including things we didn't know we took for granted. And many of these realities I wish I'd known when I first encountered them. So, while the work of life and healing continues, here are ten things I've learned about trauma along the way:

1. Trauma permanently changes us.

This is the big, scary truth about trauma: there is no such thing as “getting over it.” The **five stages of grief** model marks universal stages in learning to accept loss, but the reality is in fact much bigger: a major life disruption leaves a new normal in its wake. There is no “back to the old me.” You are different now, full stop.

This is not a wholly negative thing. Healing from trauma can also mean finding new strength and joy. The goal of healing is not a papering-over of changes in an effort to preserve or present things as normal. It is to acknowledge and wear your new life — warts, wisdom, and all — with courage.

2. Presence is always better than distance.

There is a curious illusion that in times of crisis people “need space.” I don't know where this assumption originated, but in my experience it is almost always false. Trauma is a disfiguring, lonely time even when surrounded in love; to suffer through trauma alone is unbearable. Do not assume others are reaching out, showing up, or covering all the bases.

It is a much lighter burden to say, “Thanks for your love, but please go away,” than to say, “I was hurting and no one cared for me.” If someone says they need space, respect that. Otherwise, err on the side of presence.

3. Healing is seasonal, not linear.

It is true that healing happens with time. But in the recovery wilderness, emotional healing looks less like a line and more like a wobbly figure-8. It's perfectly common to get stuck in one stage for months, only to jump to another end entirely ... only to find yourself back in the same old mud again next year.

Recovery lasts a long, long time. Expect seasons.

4. Surviving trauma takes “firefighters” and “builders.” Very few people are both.

This is a tough one. In times of crisis, we want our family, partner, or dearest friends to be everything for us. But surviving trauma requires at least two types of people: the crisis team — those friends who can drop everything and jump into the fray by your side, and the reconstruction crew — those whose calm, steady care will help nudge you out the door into regaining your footing in the world. In my experience, it is extremely rare for any individual to be both a firefighter and a builder. This is one reason why trauma is a lonely experience. Even if you share suffering with others, no one else will be able to fully walk the road with you the whole way.

A hard lesson of trauma is learning to forgive and love your partner, best friend, or family even when they fail at one of these roles. Conversely, one of the deepest joys is finding both kinds of companions beside you on the journey.

5. Grieving is social, and so is healing.

For as private a pain as trauma is, for all the healing that time and self-work will bring, we are wired for contact. Just as relationships can hurt us most deeply, it is only through relationship that we can be most fully healed.

It's not easy to know what this looks like — can I trust casual acquaintances with my hurt? If my family is the source of trauma, can they also be the source of healing? How long until this friend walks away? Does communal prayer help or trivialize?

Seeking out shelter in one another requires tremendous courage, but it is a matter of life or paralysis. One way to start is to practice giving shelter to others.

6. Do not offer platitudes or comparisons. Do not, do not, do not.

“I'm so sorry you lost your son, we lost our dog last year ... ” “At least it's not as bad as ... ”
“You'll be stronger when this is over.” “God works in all things for good!”

When a loved one is suffering, we want to comfort them. We offer assurances like the ones above when we don't know what else to say. But from the inside, these often sting as clueless, careless, or just plain false.

Trauma is terrible. What we need in the aftermath is a friend who can swallow her own discomfort and fear, sit beside us, and just let it be terrible for a while.

7. Allow those suffering to tell their own stories.

Of course, someone who has suffered trauma may say, “This made me stronger,” or “I'm lucky it's only (x) and not (z).” That is their prerogative. There is an enormous gulf between having

someone else thrust his unsolicited or misapplied silver linings onto you, and discovering hope for one's self. The story may ultimately sound very much like "God works in all things for good," but there will be a galaxy of disfigurement and longing and disorientation in that confession. Give the person struggling through trauma the dignity of discovering and owning for himself where, and if, hope endures.

8. Love shows up in unexpected ways.

This is a mystifying pattern after trauma, particularly for those in broad community: some near-strangers reach out, some close friends fumble to express care. It's natural for us to weight expressions of love differently: a Hallmark card, while unsatisfying if received from a dear friend, can be deeply touching coming from an old acquaintance.

Ultimately every gesture of love, regardless of the sender, becomes a step along the way to healing. If there are beatitudes for trauma, I'd say the first is, "Blessed are those who give love to anyone in times of hurt, regardless of how recently they've talked or awkwardly reconnected or visited cross-country or ignored each other on the metro." It may not look like what you'd request or expect, but there will be days when surprise love will be the sweetest.

9. Whatever doesn't kill you ...

In 2011, after a publically humiliating year, comedian Conan O'Brien gave students at Dartmouth College **the following warning:**

*"Nietzsche famously said, 'Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.' ... What he failed to stress is that **it almost kills you.**"*

Odd things show up after a serious loss and creep into every corner of life: insatiable anxiety in places that used to bring you joy, detachment or frustration towards your closest companions, a deep distrust of love or presence or vulnerability.

There will be days when you feel like a quivering, cowardly shell of yourself, when despair yawns as a terrible chasm, when fear paralyzes any chance for pleasure. This is just a fight that has to be won, over and over and over again.

10. Doesn't kill you.

Living through trauma may teach you resilience. It may help sustain you and others in times of crisis down the road. It may prompt humility. It may make for deeper seasons of joy. It may even make you stronger.

It also may not.

In the end, the hope of life after trauma is simply that *you have life after trauma*. The days, in their weird and varied richness, go on. So will you.