

1 Corinthians 12:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Analysis

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it—Paschei hen melos, sympaschei panta ta melē (πάσχει ἐν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη) —the prefix sym ("with, together") creates sympaschō, "suffer together, co-suffer." When the toe is stubbed, the entire body feels pain; when the stomach aches, the whole person is miserable. This is not mere sympathy but shared experience—organically unified members genuinely participate in each other's pain.

Or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it—doxazetai hen melos, synchairei panta ta melē ("one member is honored, all the members rejoice together"). The prefix syn creates synchairō, "rejoice together, co-rejoice." When the eye sees beauty or the hand accomplishes a task, the whole body shares satisfaction. Application: Christians cannot say "your suffering doesn't affect me" or "your honor makes me jealous." Authentic body-life means shared suffering and shared joy—weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). This eliminates competition and cultivates compassion.

Historical Context

Corinthian competition led believers to rejoice in others' failures and envy others' successes. Paul insists body-unity means mutual sympathy in suffering and shared celebration in honor, reversing their adversarial culture.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. When have you genuinely 'suffered with' or 'rejoiced with' another believer, feeling their experience as your own?
2. How can churches cultivate this organic sympathy rather than competitive comparison?
3. What practices help believers move from individual spirituality to shared body-life?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἴτε	πάσχει	ἐν	μέλη	συμπάσχει	πάντα	τὰ	μέλη
And	or	suffer	one	member	suffer with it	all		member
G2532	G1535	G3958	G1520	G3196	G4841	G3956	G3588	G3196

εἴτε	δοξάζεται	ἐν	μέλη	συγχαίρει	πάντα	τὰ	μέλη
or	be honoured	one	member	rejoice with it	all	G3588	member
G1535	G1392	G1520	G3196	G4796	G3956		G3196

Additional Cross-References

Romans 12:15 (Parallel theme): Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Hebrews 13:3 (Parallel theme): Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Galatians 6:2 (Parallel theme): Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

1 Peter 3:8 (Parallel theme): Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

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