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 of 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.

What Are You Known For?

One of the questions asked in the Romans 12 survey was "what are you known for in your community?" While answers varied from church to church, in all but a very few cases people in the congregation mentioned that the church was known for its involvement in the community. Here are a few responses that typify Romans 12 congregations:

- We are a huge presence in the community and help lift citizens up.
- We serve in practically every event in our community that enables us to express God's love.
- We are known for our community presence. We serve our community with our clinic and other community involvement.
- We participate in community activities and open our church doors to everyone.
- We're known for helping in the community, especially in times of crisis.
- We are known for hospitality, integrity, and active community ministry.
- We provide solutions to needs in the neighborhood.
- We reach out into our community to help others, particularly children and youth.
- We work in developing programs to reach the community such as a health fair, farmers market, community garden, day care, and Narcotics Anonymous.
- We are known for partnering with community resources.

Community involvement was a key characteristic of the visited Romans 12 congregations. No matter the size of the church or its location, these churches were viewed as "players" in the fabric of community life. They looked for needs and then figured out ways to address those needs.

Some Questions for Discussion

1. What is your congregation known for in the community?
2. Is your congregation a "player" in your community? In what ways?
3. Which of the congregational comments listed above also describe your congregation?
4. If you asked someone shopping in your local grocery store what the three biggest needs in your community were, what do you think he or she would say? Is your congregation involved in addressing those needs?
5. In what ways is your community a more loving and just place because of the existence of your congregation?

For more information about Romans 12 contact Deb Smith (dsmith@gbod.org)

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In 2007 church leaders throughout The United Methodist Church in the U.S. were invited to identify churches that demonstrated the vision of discipleship described in the twelfth chapter of Romans. Over 200 churches were surveyed or visited. Issue #1. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations.