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.

GBOD®
EQUIPPING WORLD-CHANGING DISCIPLES

Worship—The Work of the People

One of the nominating criteria for Romans 12 was to model clergy and laity in partnership. Dynamic, passionate worship happens when worship is planned, led, and enacted by the whole body, not just the "experts" or the "folks up front."

Here are a few examples from congregations where these things are happening and the result is dynamic, passionate worship.

The contemporary service at one congregation is led by a worship team with people of all ages—youth to senior adult.

In a congregation with an old, clapboard Akron plan worship space, time is set aside every Sunday in worship for people to come to kneel in prayer at the altar rail or to pray and lay hands on people who may be facing surgery or other hard times.

For the monthly, multi-cultural communion service of a congregation that actually has several distinct cultures with their own worship on other Sundays, intentional planning by a team from all four worshiping communities allows all to worship and celebrate around the Lord's Table, respecting the cultural practices and languages of each.

In one predominately Native American congregation, laity take an active role in leading everything, including prayers for healing, with the pastor joining in and leading primarily by offering the sermon.

Some Questions for Discussion

- How does the planning for worship actively involve the breadth and depth of the gifts of worshipers in your congregation? How are the gifts of children, youth, young adults, mid-life adults, and older adults represented in worship leadership?
- What are the ways in which laity and clergy intentionally partner in the planning, leading and offering of worship in your congregation?
- If your congregation has multiple services that differ in music, style, language, or other ways, how might you occasionally provide worship opportunities that will bring these worshiping communities together?

The GBOD Center for Worship Resourcing offers thousands of articles, worship planning and preaching helps and downloadable musical items for congregations of every size and style. You may find these resources at http://www.gbod.org/worship.

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 #7. © 2009 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this page for use in United Methodist congregations. To subscribe to this newsletter or for copies of previous newsletters go to http://www.gbod.org/Romans12