

Living Bodies in the Church

Christ's Incarnation justifies reviewing the ways church life involves our bodies – for example, in prayer, singing, confession, and eating and drinking – assessing why they benefit us, and practicing a little to explore their benefits.

Eric L. Johnson is professor of Christian Psychology at Houston Baptist University, serving in the Gideon Institute of Christian Psychology & Counseling. He taught psychology for 10 years at University of Northwestern and counseling for 17 years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to writing more than 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals, he edited *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, and was a co-editor of *Marriage: Its Foundation, Theology, and Mission in a Changing World*. He has written *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* and *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith*. He was the first director of the Society for Christian Psychology and has been doing pastoral counseling for 20 years. He's married to Rebekah, and they have two children, Laura and Iain, and a son-in-law, Rich. They have two grandchildren, Cash and Jedi.

1. Introduction

A. Our bodies are alive

What does that mean?

B. How and why has Christianity sometimes mistreated and neglected the human body?

C. How has this hurt the people of God?

2. God loves our bodies (Allison, 2021)

A. A good Creation

B. The Incarnation

C. God wants to enjoy and be grateful for all his gifts, and not take them for granted

D. Psychospiritual growth involves our bodies

E. Our bodies are sacred, meaningful, and amazing!

3. Faith is: that the Self rests transparently in God

Undermining the Pharisee in all of us (consider the Sermon on the Mount; we can use our bodies to pretend)

4. What gets in the way of our bodies?

A. If we've had physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, we may be disconnected to our bodies

B. Insecure attachment

C. Unresolved wounds from the past

D. Christ is the healer of our souls (Is 53:6)

5. Body Skills

A. Attending to our own body

1) The role of our torso in human life

2) Interoception

a. Emotions are signs

b. The meaning of emotions

3) Using our imagination and opening up

4) Seeking the touch of the Healer of our souls

B. Attending to the bodies of others

1) Looking around and being present

2) Honoring the bodies of our brothers and sisters (Paulsell, 2019)

One part of this is to affirm the sex/gender of one another

3) Listening to their words (head-to-head communication)

4) Listening to their emotions (heart-to-heart communication)

Emotions are meaningful. They communicate the essence of a person
So, we honor them by listening well to their emotions.

5) Reading another's body language

6) Being moved by another's face (Porges & Dana, 2018)

7) Dwelling in another's body through empathy

8) Communicating to others with our bodies

a) Smiling is a gift

But what if we're pretending?

b) Being real is a better gift than smiling

c) The gift of non-sexual touch

i. A holy kiss? (Ro 16:16; 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26; 1Pt 5:14)

ii. Praying and the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 8:17; 13:3; 19:6)

Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17)

The need for permission

iii. Embracing others in Christian love (Acts 20:37)

What does holding someone do to their body?

Take a moment.

iv. Safe, ethical touching in the church

v. Protecting the church (and ourselves) from sexual abuse

6. Ways we use our bodies on Sunday morning (Taylor, 2023)

Church on Sunday morning is a psychospiritual training ground

A. Getting there and “entering in”

B. Body posture and body movement

1. Standing

2. Kneeling

3. Lifting up hands (1Ti 2:8)

4. Moving our bodies symbolically

C. Singing (like the Psalms)

What’s going on with you when you sing?

What about lament?

D. Praying publicly together

We, not I

E. Confession and Forgiveness

How do we know we’re participating?

Using guided imagery?

F. The sermon

A posture of active receptivity

G. The Lord’s Supper

What is its meaning as a bodily activity?

H. After the service, before people leave: honoring and connecting

7. Small groups

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