**Question: "What does the Bible say about organ donation?"

Arguments in favour of organ donation**

The Bible does not specifically address the issue of organ transplantation as this would have been unknown in Bible times. However, there are verses that illustrate broad principles of love and compassion toward others. Jesus said "love your neighbour" (Matthew 5:43) and this can be traced all the way back to Leviticus 19:18. From the earliest days in the Old Testament, God's people were commanded to demonstrate a love for God as well as for their neighbours. Being willing to donate an organ from our own bodies could be seen as an extreme example of selfless sacrifice for another.

The utmost example of sacrifice was Jesus Christ giving His body to save all of humanity. John summed up the command well when he wrote, "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). Jesus spoke of caring for the hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked, sick, and imprisoned (Matthew 25:40). He said: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Jesus also used the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach that Christians are to be kind and to show love toward everyone, regardless of who they are.

**Arguments against organ donation**

Some people view organ donation as the ultimate form of mutilating the human body. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 are used to defend the idea that organs should not be harvested from a person's body: “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies”. As stewards of God's creation, we should treat our bodies with respect, and avoid whatever harms them.

A big concern among some Christians is the concept that the entire body needs to be present and preserved for the resurrection. Therefore, some Christians are reluctant to donate organs because they believe that resurrection requires a "complete" body. However, when God told Adam, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). Human earthly bodies would decay and return to the soil.

Paul provided some insight into this matter by pointing out the difference between the physical body at death (which may be disposed of in a variety of ways), and the spiritual body of the resurrection. The earthly body, "that of flesh and blood," will not enter heaven: ([1 Corinthians 15:50](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Corinthians%2015.50)). Based on these facts, Christians should not fear or reject organ donation merely in an attempt to keep the physical body intact for the resurrection.

**Additional thoughts on organ donation and organ harvesting**
There are moral arguments against organ harvesting. There is nothing ethically wrong in recovering organs from the dead, but most successful organ transplants require that any prospective organs are kept alive with blood and oxygen flowing through them until they are removed from the body. This causes a problem, because we cannot, and must not, support the termination of a life in favour of organ donation. The medical profession has traditionally used the end of all heart and lung activity to mark the point of death. But medical technology can now sustain (via a respirator) heart and lung activity for days or even weeks after a patient had irreversibly lost all brain function. Christians can support organ donation only in those cases in which death has been determined by every criteria, "including complete loss of brain function," rather than just by one or two criteria. Only patients who are irreversibly and completely brain dead should be considered for organ donation.

There is an issue with using organs developed through therapeutic cloning. This is a form of stem cell research in which a clone is manufactured for the purpose of medical research or therapy. As the exact moment in which life begins and God gives a soul to a person is unknown, it could potentially be murder to create a clone merely for the purpose of directing its cells to create a donor organ.

Another issue is with organs harvested and sold through human trafficking. Some of the most vulnerable people today—migrants, the homeless, and others—can be tricked or forced to donate their organs. Trafficking in body parts is not common, but people might be tempted when faced with a real need and a long waiting list: about 23% of people who need kidneys die before they get a transplant.