

From The Pew To The Crew

Romans 15

The purpose of the local church is...

- To **glorify** God together. Romans 15:6, 7, 9, 11
 - In these verses Paul references the local church in Rome with the word, “ye.”
- To **fulfill** the ministry of reconciliation together. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

If you have been saved for any amount of time, it is time to move from being a pew sitter to a crew member!

Illustration: When athletes first join a team, there is a window of training that they must first go through before being able to contribute on the front lines. Some athletes will be aggressive and learn quickly. Others will lose interest and stay on the sidelines, watching others pass them on the depth chart as they waste their abilities and waste their purpose for being on the team.

Every believer must seek to **fulfill** his or her purpose as a member of the body of Christ.

How can you fulfill your purpose in the church?

1. By working **with** other believers in the local church. Romans 15:5-7, 14
 - Wherever you live, you should seek to find a local church that understands God’s desire for believers to fulfill His ministry of reconciliation, and get involved as part of the body to honor His desire!
 - No matter where you are in your Christian walk, there is **something** you can do in the local church to fulfill God’s ministry of reconciliation.
 - Could you imagine what would happen to this church if there were only one person who ran everything? There would obviously be no church today!
 - Everyone in the local church must function **together**, using his or her various abilities to fulfill God’s desires and honor Him.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:14-23
 - The body of Christ is much bigger than CrossRoads, but this local church is a place where the body of Christ is able to meet together to worship the Head, Jesus Christ, and to minister to the needs of the body.
 - However, many people are content to sit on the sideline and not get in the fight!
 - Satan loves to convince people that they are not needed, or that their skills are not important.
 - Satan will convince people of the thought, “Eh, someone else will do that.”
 - For example, many slots during WTB have to be filled at the last minute because others who are capable assume someone else will do it.
 - Paul always led by example! He let his actions confirm God’s instructions. Look at the list of people he served with in Romans 16!

- Every ministry has its laborers, and those laborers should be honored as laborers together in the body of Christ.

2. By **looking** for those who are in need of strengthening. Romans 15:1-3

- It is evident that everyone is at a different stage in life and going through different trials.
 - There are those who are infants, those who are toddlers, young children, teens, young adults, and so on.
 - Everyone is at a different level of intelligence.
 - Everyone is at different levels of fitness.
- But how do the weak get stronger? They get with someone stronger who can help them to grow in their strength, be it physical or mental.
- The weak **learn** how to be strengthened by those who are already strong.
 - **Illustration:** It would be ridiculous for a rookie in the NFL to join a team and then begin telling the veterans how to stand and how to read plays!
- The same principle is found here in Romans 15 when it comes to the strength of believers.
 - Read Romans 15:1-3.
 - All believers are at a different level in their spiritual walk, and God's desire is that everyone be looking out for those who are weaker, or younger, in their faith, to help them strengthen or grow.
- Those who are weak in their faith **need** stronger believers to help them grow.
 - **Illustration:** In what the teens like to call my "glory days," I lifted weights almost every day. Sometimes, I would take a teenager who wanted to get stronger and I would let him work out with me, helping him to gain in his physical strength. This took time, faithfulness, and a desire to reach new goals.
 - If we, as a church, become self-consumed and content with our spiritual growth, not only are we prohibiting God from working in us, but we are aiding in the crippling of the already-weaker Christians around us!
- All believers should be constantly **growing** in their relationship with Christ.
 - The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:12, after having been an apostle for many years, "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*" **Philippians 3:12**
- By Paul not becoming arrogant, satisfied, or tired of growing in his knowledge of Christ, he was able to continue to help others, who had already learned much from him, continue to grow.
 - As Paul closed his letter to the Philippians, he was in jail. Yet he was still able to be an example to them to learn from and follow after.
 - "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*" **Philippians 4:9**

- **Illustration:** When a master of karate stops sparring as a form of practice, he stops learning, and therefore hinders his own growth and that of those whom he trains.
 - Every believer is at a different point in his or her Christian walk. There is always someone to learn from and someone to teach!
 - It is vital to God that believers continue to grow, making it possible for others to grow also.
3. By taking what you **learn** to those who are without. Romans 15:20
- Finally, we see in Romans 15 that it is important for believers to take the truth of the gospel out to those who have not heard.
 - Read Romans 15:20.
 - When you are in school, what is the most honoring thing you can do for a teacher? It isn't buying him a plaque, or treating him to a nice diner. The most honoring thing you can do is apply what you have learned, successfully use it, and share it with someone else.
 - I recently read a quote that said it is more pleasing to God to have lived out one verse of Scripture than to have memorized a multitude.
 - As a part of the body of Christ, we must each have a personal desire to take the love, grace, and mercy that we learn about from God's Word to those who are without.
 - Paul was so burdened with this point that he charged the church in Rome to be willing to go, even at the expense of their own salvation.
 - Read Romans 9:3; 10:1.
 - Obviously one can't lose his or her salvation, but Paul was so burdened that he was willing to give his up so those who had not believed could believe.
 - The solution to reaching the lost is simple! Believers must be **willing** to go!
 - *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* **Romans 10:14**

Conclusion:

- There are far too many Christians in this world who are **content** to sit in church, week after week, and watch others do the work of the ministry.
- The God that we serve and come to worship deserves more than our Sunday best. He deserves everything.
- To honor Christ and His sacrifice, God has asked that we live our lives as a **living** sacrifice, fulfilling our purpose in and through the local church.
- Read Romans 12:1.
- Let each of us realize today the importance of fulfilling our individual purpose in the local church.