

A Church for Others: Ministry Abounds – Part 3 Romans 12:1-11

Introduction:

1. Did you know that you are not on this earth to simply consume space, oxygen, and resources? You are not on this earth simply for consumption, but for contribution.
2. Have you ever wondered why God didn't take you to heaven after you trusted Christ and entered His family? It is because God has a work for you to do.
3. When you were saved you became the recipient of every spiritual blessing that God has in Christ. You were the receiver, the “taker.”
4. God left you on this earth to give something back. What did the Thessalonian believers do after they were saved? They served! 1 Thessalonians 1:9
5. God has given you a new life in Christ and left you on this earth so you can have the opportunity and privilege of serving Him! God has a ministry for you!
6. What is ministry? It is very plain and simple. Ministry is giving to and serving others.
 - In Philippians 2:4, the word “*look*” means “to take aim at.”
 - What acts of ministry have you offered this past week? What have you done to be a blessing to someone else (you didn't get paid for it, you had no ulterior motives)?
7. In a church for others, the members of that local church have a ministry mindset. In a church for others, ministry abounds. Every believer should be actively engaged in ministry.
8. Why is it so crucial that every person be involved in ministry? This text will explain clearly.

First, every believer is saved to serve. vs. 1-2

1. In verse 1, Paul appeals to these believers to offer themselves to God and to get involved in serving. What is the basis of Paul's appeal? “...*by the mercies of God...*”
 - These people had experienced God's mercy and forgiveness. Paul says, “Is it not reasonable that you should serve this one who saved you?”
2. Notice the word “*reasonable*.” The Greek word for “*reasonable*” is “*logikos*.” This is the where we get our English word “*logic*.”
 - So Paul is saying, “Think it through logically and sensibly.”
 - Does not all reason and logic tell you that a life of service is due to the One who, in compassion and love, bore for us the shame and suffering that was **our** due?
3. If you have been saved by His mercy, you don't serve Him out of guilt, shame, or fear. You serve Him out of gratitude because you **want** to!
4. Any sacrifice we make can't compare to the sacrifice He made for us. Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice in death so I could be forgiven, restored to God, and live with Him forever.

5. Notice, Paul said that as we minister for God, it is a **living** sacrifice. Christ died for us so we could **live** unto Him. 2 Corinthians 5:15
6. In order for a person to humbly offer themselves to God and minister to others, it takes a mindset that is contrary to the world's thinking. The world's thinking is to look out for number one. It takes a renewed, transformed mind. vs. 2a
 - Satan's world system does not teach you to have a ministry mindset. It teaches you to serve your own lusts and pleasures. Titus 3:3
7. But here is the core issue: you will never experience the joy of God's will until you find your place of ministry. Vs. 2b cf. Ephesians 2:10 - You were saved to serve. It is the clearly revealed will of God that you be actively engaged in ministry.

Second, every believer is gifted to serve. Vs. 3-8

1. God likens the church to a human body. vs. 4-5
 - You have different members of your body with different functions, but they all **have** a function. When God made human bodies, He put every member of our body there for a reason and a purpose. Now let's read verses 4 and 5.
 - Do you see the divine illustration? If you know Christ as your Savior, you are part of this body, called the church.
2. When God places you in the body of the church, He expects you to **function**, not vegetate. "Vegetate" means "to lead a passive existence without exertion of body and mind."
 - What happens if I never use my legs? They not only will quit functioning, they will become a major hindrance for the rest of my body.
3. You are a part of Christ's body. Because God expects you to function as a contributing member of the body, God has gifted you to serve or minister. vs. 6
 - Let me clarify. People definitely have talents and abilities that they were born with or have developed over the years. God desires for you to use these also for His honor and glory.
 - But there are spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us when we get saved that are specifically for spiritual use within the body of Christ.
 - These are gifts of God's grace. This is why verse 3 says that we shouldn't think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. It is all of His grace.
4. The purpose of your gifts is to be a blessing to others. They are not for your own self-edification, but for the edification of others. 1 Corinthians 14:12; 1 Peter 4:10
5. Once you are saved, picture yourself as a member of God's team.
 - God longs for you to be a contributing member of the team.
 - There is no worse feeling than being a member of a team and feeling like you have no value or importance to the team at all. Nobody wants to feel like they are taking up space and that they are totally irrelevant.
 - There is no reason for anybody to feel that way on God's team. You don't have to sit on the grandstands or on the sideline. You are gifted to serve,

and there is a place for you in this church. There are people serving right now as I speak (teens, security, nursery, etc.).

- You will not feel like a contributing member until you find your place of ministry.
6. The effectiveness of our church depends on the number of people who are involved in meaningful ministry.
 7. One of the problems in the modern-day American church is that whenever there is a need in the church, people have the rationale, “Let’s hire an outside professional to come in and meet the need.” So everybody sits around, while the “paid staff” run around like crazy trying to do the work of the ministry. That sounds like what you see on TV.
 - You see 22 men on a football field playing their hearts out, knocking their heads together, while about 100 others watch on the sidelines and about 60,000 others are in the grandstands yelling and screaming and second-guessing everything that happens.
 - This is not God’s plan for the local church.
 8. God gifts members of the local church (common, ordinary, everyday people), and then expects them to exercise those gifts for the furtherance and advancement of the church.
 9. God gifts certain people in the church with teaching and leadership gifts so that they can grow and mature the saints and prepare **them** for ministry.
Ephesians 4:11-16
 - Once they prepare them, they turn them loose and let them minister! Coaches prepare players to **play**! Players don’t sit around and watch the coaches play. But this is how many churches operate.
 10. The apostle Paul lists these team gifts in verses 6-8.
 - Prophecy - This gift deals with the proclamation of God’s truth. Some people have the gift of proclaiming, explaining, and applying God’s Word.
 - Ministry - This is the gift of working behind the scenes, performing necessary jobs, manual tasks, doing whatever it takes to help and get the job done.
 - Teaching - This is the gift of communicating and clarifying the details of God’s Word in such a way that others will learn.
 - Exhortation - This is the gift of encouraging and challenging others to follow God’s Word.
 - Giving - This is a strong desire to give and share of your material resources to further the work of God.
 - Ruling - This is the gift of leading, organizing, and administering ministries and people.
 - Showing mercy - This is the gift of ministering to those who are sick, suffering, or afflicted.
 11. Here are a few important principles about these gifts:
 - You don’t earn these gifts, otherwise they wouldn’t be called gifts. They are gifts of God’s grace given to us by God’s Holy Spirit.
 - These gifts aren’t for you; they are for the edification of others. They are given for the purpose of ministry.

- You must grow and develop your gifts. Just like a baby doesn't come out of the womb full-grown, but has the capacity to grow, your spiritual gifts provide you a capacity to serve. It is your responsibility to grow in Christ.
 - Illustration: You don't get saved on Sunday, and Monday morning you wake up and you are a deep teacher of God's Word. You must develop that gift.
 - Never confuse spiritual gifts with spiritual responsibility. Many of the gifts are spiritual graces that every believer has a responsibility to develop and grow. Some believers will excel in these areas, challenging and teaching us.
12. God has gifted you to serve Him. What does this mean? It means that it is God's will for every believer to edify and build up others through ministry. Ministry is very natural and normal for the true believer.

Third, every believer is commanded to serve. vs. 9-11

1. After talking about the different team gifts in verses 7 and 8, Paul begins in verse 9 to give a series of short, concise commands for us to obey.
2. Notice that we are commanded to **fervently** serve the Lord. It is not a suggestion, but a clear-cut command. Not only are we to do it, but we are to approach this thing of ministry with fervency and great intensity. "Fervent" means "to be red hot and glowing."
3. So, this idea of serving and ministering is not optional for the believer. None of us are going to get an exemption.
4. Let's read an absolutely incredible passage from the life of Christ on earth. Matthew 20:26-28
 - Jesus has commanded us to serve, yet He set the example.
 - If anyone would be exempt from serving, it would be Christ. He was God in the flesh, yet Philippians 2:7 says, "*He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant...*"
 - If Christ did not consider Himself exempt from serving, then you and I certainly are not.
5. When we examine the life of Christ, we see clearly that serving God really means serving others. Galatians 5:13 says, "*by love serve one another.*"
 - The way we serve God is by serving others.
 - In Matthew 25:35-40 the time context is the tribulation, but there is a powerful principle that we see and learn. When you serve others, you are serving Christ.
 - Paul served the Lord in Ephesus. But what did this service look like? He was helping and ministering to people! Acts 20:18-20
6. You can't be like Jesus if you are not serving. It is that simple. If we are going to demonstrate Christ in our daily walk, we must be actively engaged in ministry.

In Conclusion:

1. Serving God is a choice. In verse 1 Paul said, “*I beseech you...*” This literally means, “I beg of you.” God will not **make** you serve Him. It is a definite act of your free will.
2. But, one day you will stand before God and give account for your life. God will evaluate what you did to serve others with the gifts, talents, abilities, mind, health, and material resources that you had here on earth.
3. Can you imagine on that day God saying to us, “I saved you to serve, I gifted you to serve, I commanded you to serve, and I even came to earth and set the example for you?”
4. What excuse could you and I possibly have on that day that will hold up?
5. You will never know the thrill of impacting lives, and we will not become a church for others, until each member is actively engaged in ministry.
6. One of the greatest decisions that you could ever make is to find your place of ministry and service for the Lord.