

Service Must Be a Priority

Romans 12:4-13

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Today we conclude our 4 week sermon series titled "Priorities for the New Year." We began with **love**, then moved to **worship**; Last week we saw the importance of **witness** and today we will examine "**Christian Service**."

Though the elements that we have examined over the past few weeks are separate, they are also intertwined. Without love there will be no worship, without worship there will be no motivation or passion to witness and if you do not love, worship or witness... chances are that you will not serve.

A story is told of a Roman aqueduct at Segovia, Spain. It was built in 109 A.D. For 1800 years, it carried cool water from the mountains to the hot and thirsty city. Nearly 60 generations of men drank from its flow. Then came a new generation, who said, "This aqueduct is so great a marvel that it ought to be preserved for our children, as a museum piece. We shall relieve it of its centuries-long labor."

They did; they laid modern iron pipes. They gave the ancient bricks and mortar a reverent rest. And the aqueduct began to fall apart. The sun beating on the dry mortar caused it to crumble. The bricks and stone sagged and threatened to fall. Idleness disintegrated its usefulness.

i. An Individual Problem - There are many Christians who have placed themselves upon the shelf and are now in the same condition as this Roman aqueduct.(dried up and falling apart)

ii. A Collective Problem - As a result of individuals who neglect to serve, many churches have become "museum pieces" and are now irrelevant to the communities they were called to serve.

The Apostle Paul, in Romans compares the church to a "Body" The human body serves as a great illustration as to the workings, plan and potential of the Church. Join me in Romans 12

As we consider the thought "Service Must Be a Priority" The first thing I would like us to see is:

I. The Unity in Christian Service v. 4-5. Paul begins with a comparison. He compares the “Church” to the human body. Notice: The Illustration - v4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not have the same function...

How many different systems make up the human body? The Cardiovascular, digestive and skeletal systems as examples. Fifteen systems in all. Each of these systems work independently and also work together in order for us to function properly. Paul uses the human body as a grand example of diversity and unity.

This same unity of design and purpose is to exist within the body of Christ. That is the idea he turns to in - v5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ. Unity in the church involves more than simply getting along, it requires each of us serving our specific purpose and working together.

It is amazing how the body works, if you wake up in the middle of the night to check on a noise that you heard and you stub your little toe, your whole body hurts. From what I am old this same little toe has a large impact on your balance.

Now, we don't put much focus on the little toe, you never hear of someone paying thousands of dollars for plastic surgery to improve the look of their little toe. But it is a part of the body, it serves a purpose and is beneficial to the rest of your body.

There are some areas of service that may not receive much attention, but are needful nonetheless. Every part of Christ's body is needful, useful and profitable. But in many cases certain elements of “the Body” are not working together. When this happens, troubles will arise for the entire body. Unfortunately many have come to believe that they can get along just as well without other believers. There are also many who seem to think that the rest of the body can handle things without them!

Every part of the body has a duty and all parts come together for the good of the whole. To put it plainly if you are saved, you are a part of the body. If you are a part of the body, there is a place of service for you... **AND SERVICE MUST BE A PRIORITY!!** Most people wish to serve God - but in an advisory capacity only. Some like to serve as consultants - There is no shortage of people who will tell you what needs to be done in the church.... No shortage of people who will tell you everything that is wrong with the church, but these same people are never the ones who are willing to roll up their sleeves and shoulder the load with those who are doing more than their share of service! Some like to talk about what they are going to do.

The story is told of two goats that met each other on a narrow ledge just wide enough for one goat to pass. The two goats faced each other and wondered, What shall we do? They could not back up that would be too dangerous. They could not go around because the ledge was too narrow. Now, if the goats had no more sense than humans they would have began butting each

other until one fell over the ledge. However, goats have a lot of sense, more than some people. What they did: one goat laid down and let the other walk over him. There must be a willingness to lay down for the other to walk over. Humans would have been arguing, "So, who's going to lie down?" How hard it is for us humans to humble ourselves for the good of others. To be least in the eyes of others, for their good. Someone says, "Yes, but it is the principle of the thing." The principle of living together is 'love'.

Of course, we need to look no further than the example of our Savior Jesus, who was willing to lay his life down for a ransom for many – and for me, too! He came not to be served, but serve.

God created us not as creatures to be served, but as servants, forgiven by His grace and fueled by His Spirit. If you know what needs to be done, JUST DO IT! How can you perform Christian Service? Because of the abilities that God has given us.

We can accomplish things that may seem impossible because of the power that is at our disposal. God has given each of His children a gift to use to serve Him – 1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

By His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. If you are good at anything, if you accomplish anything it is not because of yourself but rather the One who works in and through you!

If you are able to sing – teach – play an instrument – be a leader – be an encourager – or to serve in any capacity – if you have any of these talents, it is because God, through His grace, gave you that ability.

Why did He give you that ability? So that you can use it to bring glory to His name! It has been said that if you don't use your talent you will lose it... and that is true! It is also true that if you abuse your talent you may lose it.

Serve with all your heart! Teach with everything you have! Encourage everyone you encounter! Give generously! Take the leadership responsibility seriously! Show compassion to all men! Whatever your gift, give it all!

It is clear through our text today and many others that WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST. A "Casting Crowns" song asks this question: If we are Christ's body, are His arms reaching? If we are Christ's body, are His hands healing? If we are Christ's body, are His words teaching? If we are Christ's body, are His feet going?

Christian friend, SERVICE MUST BE A PRIORITY!