



Sermon Series: More Than a Sidekick: Serving Alongside Others

To be used with Session 2: Barak

Sermon Title Possibilities: Serving Together As A Church

Scripture: Romans 12:3-8

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study “Barak” this sermon builds upon today’s Bible study by expounding upon the fact that God has given gifts to His church, and He intends for the gifts to be used for His glory.

Introduction: Some would contend that one of the greatest NBA teams of all time was the Chicago Bulls of 1995-1996. They had a record of 72-10, which was literally the best record of all time. The star of the team was Michael Jordan who averaged 30.1 points per game for his career. But Michael Jordan was not on the court by himself. He had a team around him, and it was a team record. In a similar manner, God has set up His church to not operate in isolation, but rather to serve together as a unified body. Michael Jordan did not win a championship by himself and we as a church will not be successful as individuals. Instead, we will glorify God when we use our spiritual gifts as God intended.

1. We serve together in humility (Rom. 12:3).

Paul was the author, and he wrote to the church at Rome. He spent the first eleven chapters teaching doctrine. As he transitioned to chapter twelve, he told the church they were to be a living sacrifice which is pleasing to the Lord and an act of worship. The context of this passage is understanding and using the spiritual gifts that God has given His church.

The first command that we discover in this passage is that no one should think more highly of themselves, but rather think sensibly. The reason that we should think sensibly is because we can identify with Paul in that grace was given to him and it was given to us as well. When we understand that grace is given and not earned, then we are able to operate in humility. One of the easiest ways to define and understand grace is simply as God’s unconditional love. It is His unconditional love that sent Christ to die in our place and He has given this love to us. We have not earned it.

2. We serve together in unity (Rom. 12:4-5).

Would the Bulls have been as successful if the team had five Michael Jordans? Probably not. The reason being is because he would not be most effective at getting all the rebounds. While the Bible does not describe God’s church as a team, it does describe God’s church as a body. Therefore, would a body be healthy if all parts were a right arm, or all parts served as the left

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hand? The answer to this question would be no. If a body is to be healthy, then it is going to take all parts functioning together as intended.

If a body is to function well then there must be diversified unity. We have diversity in that someone needs to serve as the right hand, someone else needs to serve as an ear and someone else needs to serve as an internal organ so that the entire body is functioning. We have unity in that all parts are working in conjunction with each other towards the goal of a sustained and healthy life. This is what the passage means when it says we who are many are one body is Christ.

3. We serve together using our gifts (Rom. 12:6-8).

Verses 6-8 serve as a listing of spiritual gifts that God has given His church. We can discover two important truths in these verses. First, we have been given different gifts. It is all too easy for us to look at someone else's gift and feel envious. We wished that we could teach like someone else or lead like someone else. But, if everyone was a teacher, who would set up the room for the teacher? The gift of service is vital to the overall function of the church. No one gift is more important than another, thus the need to serve in humility.

The second truth we discover is that the grace gifts we have been given are meant to be used. Paul issued the command "use it" in verse 6. If we look at the original language of this command, we discover that it is to be applied for each of the gifts listed. Therefore, someone with the gift of service, is to serve. Someone with the gift of teaching is to teach. Another amazing fact about this passage is that Paul did not issue any stipulations to the command. He did not tell the church at Rome to use the gifts after they had completed all needed theological courses or after they had learned all of the answers to life's difficult questions. Since he did not have any stipulations on them, we do not have any either.

Conclusion: Phil Jackson was the head coach of the Bulls when they were on their magical run. If the game was on the line, he knew that he could call on Michael. It would have been tragic if Michael would have looked at his coach when he was called upon and said, "No thanks."

As a church, God is calling us to more than an NBA championship. He is calling us to go and make disciples of all nations. We may not have Michael Jordan skills, but we have God's grace and His Spirit inside of us as believers. It is time for us to answer His call as we humbly serve together as a church and thereby function as the healthy body He intends us to be.

Author Bio

Tod Tanner has degrees from Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his family reside in Wartrace, TN and serves as the Executive Vice President of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation.

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