



*“FINDING YOUR MINISTRY”

Biblical Text: Romans 12:6-8

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Last Sunday the Kansas City Chiefs moved to *5-0 with a victory over the Houston Texans. It was pretty thrilling to watch! This afternoon at Arrowhead Stadium at 3:25 they'll be trying to make it 6-0 as they face the Pittsburg Steelers. **Go Big Red!**

*That may not be a big deal if you aren't a football fan. It's OK, I get it - well, I actually don't get it at all! But, it's OK – as long as you don't call me at 3:25 this afternoon!

But even if you're not a football fan, there is a lesson to be learned. The Chiefs' victories were achieved as a **team** and not by just one individual. *As a coach, Andy Reid deserves credit. Alex Smith, after some seasons where even Kansas City fans wondered if we had the right quarterback, is playing great. The running backs like rookie Kareem Hunt and the receivers like Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill have also been just terrific.

But here's the thing - the offensive linemen and the defense, who rarely get much attention from the media, are also playing outstanding football. *Andy Reid says: *“...the entire team is “playing in synch” with one another.”* That's what great teams do.

And when they do, they win. To use a metaphor from Gay's favorite sport, *“All the oars have to be in the water, pulling in the same direction.”* When that happens for a rowing crew, a ball team, a Church, or a nation, the outcomes are remarkable.

Bill Hybels once put it this way, *“When leaders are leading, and teachers are teaching, and helpers are helping ... when all the parts are working together ... it's the most unstoppable force on earth!”* That is God's design.

Look at Ephesians 4:11-12: *“Christ himself called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of God's people for the work of **ministry**...”*¹

God's design is for every Christian doing ministry in their area of giftedness. The Greek word for ministry is diakonia, service, the ministry of all the people of God. Those with leadership gifts, like me are not supposed to be the only ones on the field, like we were the professional athletes and everyone else the spectators.

But that's how we often see it. And even if we don't we usually get the “volunteer” side of ministry all messed up also. *I learned that from Bill Hybels too. *“When it comes to serving in the Church too many leaders just look for someone to fill a slot.”*

And people are not slot machines. It's just not how we are made.

¹ Ephesians 4:11-12, paraphrased by the author based on the [King James Version](#) of the Bible.

* Here's how Bill says it usually goes. Pastor Bob gets all pumped up and decides he's going to more people involved in ministry and his first sermon is: *"Whatever Happened to Commitment?"* He says: *"If you want to show your commitment, sign up for one of the positions on the sheet at the table in the lobby."*

Next week he preached from the text, *"Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ."* He said, *"Whatever you like to do, stop doing it. And start doing the things the church really needs to be done. Somebody has to. Sign up in the lobby."*

The third week he spent the entire sermon reading from Foxe's Book of Martyrs. He says, *"Our ancestors in the faith were thrown to the lions and burned at the stake. All I'm asking you is to teach fourth grade Sunday School. Somebody needs to sign up."*

The next week he brought little Jamie, a fourth grade girl, up to the pulpit with him. He said, *"Jamie, how's it going to feel to be down in your classroom with no teacher this year? You'd might wind up getting into trouble or even using drugs. Right?"*

Bob then says, *"Look. I don't care if you don't even like kids. We need somebody for the 4th Grade class or I'm going to preach on this topic all the way to Christmas."* And one guy in the back finally couldn't stand the abuse. And so he signed up.

Mind you, he had no passion or gifts for teaching, none. It was a miserable year for the kids, and for him too. And after a year he ended up saying, *"I will never sign up for a volunteer job in the Church ever again. Never. Life's too short for this."*

That's just not what God had in mind. * Look at our text from Romans 12:6-8: ***"⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith;⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching;⁸ the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness."***²

We have different gifts and passions. And sometimes we have to try on a few hats before we find the one that fits. If we stick with it we can find a ministry to use our gifts for His Glory! And when teachers are teaching, encouragers are encouraging, musicians musicianing (*I know that's not a word,*) leaders are leading, marketers marketing ... all of us serving in our areas of gifts and passion – it's a beautiful thing.

* For most of us, there is a basic, God-given passion where we feel most natural, most ourselves. When we can tap into that, it helps us find our ministry "fit."

For me is encouraging / coaching / cheerleading. I know that because, over the years, that is what I have found myself doing more than anything else.

² Romans 12:6-8, [New Revised Standard Version](#). Copyright © 1946, 1952, and 1971 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

For a long time, I thought my primary passions were in preaching and leadership and administration, where I have gifts. But my foundational passion is encouragement.

Everything else I do in ministry - preaching, teaching, and working with people – has as its primary objective to help people believe in themselves, build on their strengths and to help them to believe God is at work and not give up hope.

I can't tell you what your gifts are. I can point you to some Scriptures that will help you know the options, Biblically. *The Bible gives us several "gift lists." For example, we have today's text from Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:7-12; 1 Corinthians 12:18; 1 Corinthians 14:26 and next week's text from Ephesians 4:11-16.

*You can take advantage of the free Spiritual Gift Inventory on oldmission.org.

*Most of all, I hope you'll believe me when I tell you that God has placed something special, deep in each one of us, that will determine our best course in ministry. And that God will be OK, and I promise we will be too in the Church, if you experiment a little. We won't expect you to say yes to everything. I promise.

The most important thing is this. Don't give up. If you look for your passion and gifts with an open heart, I believe you'll find something useful in you for God's glory.

There is nothing more amazing than finding there is something useful to God in you!

Like Doug, and Rick, and Kerry, and Kathleen, and Ernie (tell their stories) and hundreds of other people I know.

*Remember these words from Romans 12:6:

****"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."³***

Let us pray.

³ Romans 12:6, English Standard Version of the Bible. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.