

FIELD GUIDE

Serve the Church



CHRIST COVENANT

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Serve the Church

INTRODUCTION

The Bible portrays the church as a living organism. In 1 Corinthians 12:12, the apostle Paul writes, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” To give shape to how the Corinthian church is to understand itself, Paul offers an extended analogy of a living, breathing, functional body. In the verses that follow, Paul explains how the body functions as an interdependent system that needs each part (feet, hands, ears, eyes) working together under the headship of Christ.

This analogy of the body is very instructive for the church when it comes to understanding our responsibility and relationship to one another in areas of service. In order to flourish as the body of Christ, all members must faithfully steward their giftings. As 1 Corinthians 12:27 declares, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

When Christ entered our world, He came with full authority. In fact, at the end of the gospel of Matthew, we read these words from Jesus: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been

given to me” (Matt. 28:18). This is a declaration that Jesus is the unhindered Lord of all, that He will do as He pleases, and even that He is due the worship of the entire world. Other places in Scripture affirm that Jesus is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the purpose of all things (Col. 1:15–20).

And yet, in Matthew 20:28, Jesus says, “...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Do you see what is being stated here? The God-Man, the Son of God, the hope of life, and the Light of the World who has all authority did not come to be served, though He rightfully could have. Rather, He came to serve to the point of greatest cost. With these things in mind, it can be rightfully stated that a life lived in union with and under the headship of Christ is a life that makes serving the body of Christ a treasured priority.

FIVE FRUITS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

1. Serving honors the Lord

Quite simply, serving honors God because He has commanded us to love and serve one another under the headship of Christ. Galatians 5:13–14 says, “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

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2. Serving evidences a love of God

The first and greatest commandment according to Christ is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt. 22:37–38). Jesus goes on to say that the second greatest commandment is like it, that you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:39). It is not by coincidence that these commandments appear next to each other. Rather, there is a deep and necessary connection between the two. When we know and actively love the God who has gone to the greatest length to serve us, we will be willing to go to great lengths to serve others. That love for others, then, is an expression of our love for God.

3. Serving is a functional reminder that life is not about us

Our culture works fastidiously to convince us that life is about us and our personal little kingdoms. And let's be honest with ourselves—we are easily convinced of this message. When we engage in serving, we remind ourselves that life is not about us. Committing to consistently serving gives us a tangible, physical reminder that our lives are meant to build up the body of Christ.

4. Serving is a blessing to others

This is simple but true. Giving of ourselves and exercising our gifts to benefit others encourages the souls of those being served.

5. Serving grows the kingdom

God's strategy for kingdom growth is the body of Christ—the local church. When members are rightly exercising their gifts and faithfully serving under the lordship of Christ, we can rightly expect that God will grow His kingdom through us.

For all these reasons and others, in order to be fully integrated into the life of the body, you need to find some way to serve the body. Your area of service might change through the years, or you may stay very consistent in one area of service, but as you serve, your understanding of who you are in the body of Christ and how the Lord desires to use your life will grow—and your joy in His kingdom will grow with it.





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