

## **“THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE”**

### ***“On Purpose In Ministry”***

#### **Scripture Reading – Romans, 11:33–12:8**

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.*

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

***‘Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.’***






***I Peter, 4:10, NIV***

THE CHURCH ON PURPOSE is based on the example of the Early Christian Church.

***‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.’***

***Acts, 2:42-47, NIV***

In Acts, 2:40-47, we read of five purposes God desires for his Church:

 <u>EVANGELISM</u>	(Acts, 2:40-41)
 <u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42)
 <u>FELLOWSHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42, 44, 46)
 <u>MINISTRY</u>	(Acts, 2:45)
 <u>WORSHIP</u>	(Acts, 2:42, 46-47)

In this series, we consider this amazing summary of the Early Christian Church.

When they actively engaged in EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, FELLOWSHIP, MINISTRY, and WORSHIP, what was the result? **‘THE LORD ADDED TO THEIR NUMBER DAILY THOSE WHO WERE BEING SAVED’.**

*If we do as they did, can our same Lord add to our number “THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED”?*

#### **“ON PURPOSE IN MINISTRY”**

*If the Church exists to reach people for Jesus and to teach people how to become like Jesus and to live like Jesus, and to care for people’s needs in the name of Jesus, this must be achieved by the acts of its members in faithful ministry and service...*

***‘All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.’***

***Acts, 2:44-45, NIV***

God’s purpose in ministry is to define and direct the Church.

These first Christians were led by the Holy Spirit to such a degree that three things were noticeable: they were all together, they sold their possessions, and they gave to the needy.

*As we look at these verses, I want us to concentrate on three important truths...*

### **1. MINISTRY INVOLVES GOD’S PEOPLE**

***‘All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.’***

***Acts, 2:44-45, NIV***

A Gallup Survey of the members and work of the Church makes interesting reading.

*50% of people do not wish to perform any service or ministry.*

*40% of people are interested in engaging in ministry but have not been asked.*

*10% of people are actively involved in personal ministry.*

I have already heard that **10% of the people in a Church do 90% of the work.**

If you want someone to do something ask a busy person, they will find a way to get it done!

*The 50% are cause for concern... ‘Therefore, in view of God’s mercy...’*








*The 40% are cause for concern... ‘I did not serve you Lord because nobody asked.’*

*The 10% are cause for concern... ‘Mary chose the better part’ at the feet of Jesus.*

The Salvation Army believes in the principle of 'THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS'.

In other words, every Christian has received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts enable any Christian to be involved in ministry. You are able to perform any function in the Corps. Officers and others have been specifically ordained and appointed, and because of their vocation, they have been called out of secular employment. However, their appointment does not invalidate your calling as a soldier of Jesus. All believers should be involved in some ministry or service.

All believers, all Christians, are \_\_\_\_\_ for ministry.

 <u>CREATED</u>	'We are created in Jesus to do good works' ( <i>Ephesians, 2:10</i> )
 <u>CALLED</u>	'He saved us and called us with a holy calling' ( <i>II Timothy, 1:9</i> )
 <u>GIFTED</u>	'Having received a gift, minister to in grace' ( <i>I Peter, 4:10</i> )
 <u>AUTHORISED</u>	'All authority is given to Christ, therefore, go' ( <i>Matthew, 28:18</i> )
 <u>PREPARED</u>	'God gave gifts, to equip the saints for ministry' ( <i>Ephesians, 4:11</i> )
 <u>REWARDED</u>	'You will receive a reward for your service' ( <i>Colossians, 3:24</i> )
 <u>ACCOUNTABLE</u>	'We receive what we have done in the body' ( <i>II Corinthians, 5:9</i> )

*'I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.'*

**Romans, 12:1-2, NIV**

## 2. MINISTRY INVOLVES GIVING UP

*'All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.'*

**Acts, 2:44-45, NIV**

The Early Church members willingly gave up their possessions to help the needy.

The act of GIVING UP is the truest act of ministry. Why would they do such a thing? It is a natural response to the amazing mercy of God shown to us, and revealed in, and through, Jesus. Their lives exemplified the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul used the mercies of God to elicit a response from Christians in Rome.

*'With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him.'*

**Romans, 12:1, JBP**

God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as living sacrifices.

This involves daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude that our sins have been forgiven. God desires that we take the various parts of our lives (body, mind, and soul) and sacrificially lay them upon the altar daily.

The First Christians had a well-founded view about their possessions.

Before Jesus Christ, John the Baptist could be found wearing rags and eating locusts and wild honey. He set the scene for a challenge to society. Whilst John the Baptist challenged society with his lifestyle and ministry, Jesus took that challenge an amazing step further when he said, "IF YOU WANT TO BE PERFECT, GO, SELL YOUR POSSESSIONS AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN. THEN COME, FOLLOW ME" (*Matthew, 19:21*).

Should all believers sell everything they own?

No... We are responsible to care for our own needs and the needs of our family so as not to be a burden on others. We should, however, be willing to give up anything if God asks us to do so. This kind of attitude allows nothing to come between us and God and keeps us from using our God-given wealth selfishly. If you are comforted by the fact that Christ did not tell all his followers to sell all their possessions, then you may be too attached to what you have.

Consider another summary of the believers and their possessions.

*'All the believers were one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.'*

**Acts, 4:32-37, NIV**

*The sharing of possessions was entirely voluntary; no one was forced to do it.*

*The sharing did not involve selling all private property; only as much as was needed.*

*The sharing was not a membership requirement to be part of the church.*

## 3. MINISTRY INVOLVES GIVING OUT

*'All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.'*

**Acts, 2:44-45, NIV**









What an exciting approach to ministry.

Church members giving up freely in order to give out freely. In a way, it reminds me of the words of Jesus to his disciples, "FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE" (*Matthew, 10:8*).

*'Ministry is the partnership of God's people with God's Spirit to accomplish God's purpose in the lives of others.'*

**David Zimmerman**

Ministry is the act of serving.

-  THE TARGET OF MINISTRY is others... your neighbours, the unsaved, the lost.
-  THE INSTRUMENT OF MINISTRY is the Gospel.
-  THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.
-  THE POWER FOR MINISTRY is provided by The Holy Spirit.
-  THE REWARD OF MINISTRY is seeing lives changed by the Word and Spirit.
-  THE PLACE OF MINISTRY is 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Ends of the Earth'.
-  THE TIME OF MINISTRY is 'always be ready' for action.
-  THE PERSON OF MINISTRY is YOU!

### **"MINISTRY INVOLVES GETTING INTO SHAPE"**






***'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'***

***Ephesians, 2:10, NIV***

*'Before God created you, he decided what role he wanted you to play on earth. He planned exactly how he wanted you to serve him, and then shaped you for those tasks. You are the way you are because you were made for a specific ministry.'*

***Rick Warren***

**MINISTRY INVOLVES GETTING INTO SHAPE, but what is meant by our SHAPE?**

-  **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**     *Discover and unwrap your Spiritual Gifts*
-  **HEART**             *Listen to your Heart*
-  **ABILITIES**        *Apply your Abilities*
-  **PERSONALITY**     *Use your Personality*
-  **EXPERIENCE**      *Employ your Experiences*

### **UNWRAP YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT**

***'A spiritual gift is given to us as a means of helping the entire church.'***

***1 Corinthians, 12:7, NLT***

**God gives every believer spiritual gifts to be used in ministry.**

*'These are special God-empowered abilities for serving him that are given only to believers... You can't earn your spiritual gifts or deserve them – that's why they are called "gifts". They are an expression of God's grace to you... Neither do you get to choose which gifts you'd like to have; God determines that.'*

***Rick Warren***

**What is God's design for your spiritual gift?**

Your gift is to profit the entire Body of Christ. Your gift is not a selfish gift – it is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Your spiritual gift is not for your enjoyment; your spiritual gift is for your employment. Only when that gift is discovered and deployed can you be fulfilled in ministry and service.

### **LISTEN TO YOUR HEART**

***'Love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.'***

***Deuteronomy, 11:13, NIV***

*'The Bible uses the term "HEART" to describe the bundle of desires, hopes, interests, ambitions, dreams, and affections you have. Your heart represents the source of all your motivations – what you love to do and what you care about most. Even today we still use the word in this way when we say, "I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART".'*

***Rick Warren***

**Physically, each of us has a unique "physical" heartbeat.**

Just as we have unique thumbprints, eye prints, and voice prints, our hearts beat in slightly different patterns. It is amazing that out of all the billions of people who have ever lived, no one has had a heartbeat exactly like yours.

**God has given each of us a unique "emotional" heartbeat.**

There are certain subjects, activities, or circumstances that interest us. We instinctively care about some things and not about others. There are things that you feel passionate about and others that you couldn't care less about. Some experiences turn you on and capture your attention while others turn you off and bore you to tears.

**How do I know when I am passionate about serving God?**

Two words characterise such passionate service: ENTHUSIASM and EFFECTIVE.

### **APPLY YOUR ABILITIES**

***'God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.'***

***Romans, 12:6a, NLT***

**Today God uses the skills and abilities of those who serve him.**

*'Your abilities are the natural talents you were born with. Some people have a natural ability with words... Other people have natural athletic abilities, excelling in physical co-ordination. Still others are good at mathematics or music or mechanics.'*

***Rick Warren***

*All our abilities come from God.*

*Every ability can be used for God's glory.*

*What you are able to do, God wants you to do*

### **USE YOUR PERSONALITY**

***'God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all.'***

***1 Corinthians, 12:6, JBP***

**God loves variety – just look around!**

*'He created each of us with a unique combination of personality traits. God made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety.'*

*He made some people "thinkers" and others "feelers". Some people work best alone while others work better with a team.'*

**Rick Warren**

**There is no right or wrong temperament for ministry.**

We need all kinds of personalities to balance the church and give it flavour. It would be really boring if we were all the same... thought the same... and did the same.

**Apparently, my personality is ISTJ – Introverted Sensing Thinking Judging.**

But whatever your personality type, you have good things that you bring to any group, and there are things that you do that will irritate other members of the group. It's just a part of human nature. When we interact we need to recognise these truths.



### **EMPLOY YOUR EXPERIENCES**

***'We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.'***

**Romans, 8:28, NIV**

*'You have been shaped by your experiences in life. Most of these experiences were out of your control. God allowed them for his purpose of moulding you.'*

**Rick Warren**

**Generally speaking, our experiences come from six sources:**

<u>FAMILY</u>	"What did you learn growing up in your family?"
<u>EDUCATION</u>	"What were your favourite subjects at school?"
<u>VOCATION</u>	"What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed?"
<u>SPIRITUAL</u>	"What have been your most meaningful times with God?"
<u>MINISTRY</u>	"How have you served God in the past?"
<u>SUFFERING</u>	"What problems, hurts, thorns, and trials have you known?"

**God never wastes a hurt; your great ministry may come out of your great hurt!**

*Kneeling before thee, Lord, I am praying, Claiming a closer communion with thee,  
Longing to sever from selfish ambition; Break thou each fetter and set my soul free.*

*Into thy hands, Lord, take me and mould me,  
E'en as the potter handles the clay;  
Make me a vessel fit for thy service;  
Cleanse me and fill me, and use me today.*

**Jessie Mountain, SASB 501:1**

*'Christ doesn't expect us to produce more than we can, but he does expect us to produce all we can by his power within us.'*

**Rick Warren**

*To this purpose, let us live so we might be able to say, "Ministry? We did it 'On Purpose'!"*