

St Martins C3 – October 5, 2025

Christ-Centred Community – We Serve Together

Sermon Notes:

Read Romans 12:1-11

Today we look practically at how we can move from being consumers to being contributors in church; from having a passive presence to becoming actively engaged. To do that, we need to serve, give, and share together.

Activation

Paul says that as a result of the grace and mercy that he has spent 11 chapters revealing in all its greatness, there must be a Christian response of surrender. Everything we do comes from our acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord and giving everything we have to Him.

Paul spends the next chapters outlining what a life that is soaked in mercy, surrendered completely, transformed by God's Spirit looks like. The first thing it looks like is activation in the church.

Action

There are seven gifts that Paul highlights. The point of this list is action. As we understand our part, we can serve together.

Prophecy – Prophecy is a special leading from God to build others up – always in line with Scripture.

Serving – Serving is getting involved with the work that needs to be done in people's lives and the church.

Teaching – Teaching is sharing God’s truth to others and discipling them. We can all do that.

Encouragement – Encouragement can mean to bring words of life, console, comfort, and counsel someone. Ask God to give you someone to encourage today.

Giving – The church can be effective because of the financial contributions of its members. We all invest in the work by giving regularly. We can also give to others in need.

Leadership – Leadership is about having an influence and care for others.

Kindness – Kindness is about showing up when people most need it. Think who you can show grace and mercy to.

Consider what ways you can serve with others to make the church a richer place and God’s body work together.

Attitude

There are two parts of our attitude that Paul highlights.

Love

The only thing that matters is the people around us. We should always serve for their good and not for our own.

Enthusiasm

Paul expects that because we are doing it for God, we will work with spiritual fervour and zeal, treating our commitments with seriousness and following through on what we say we will do. The church needs us to serve together!

Questions for Connect Groups:

Key Point

We need to move from having a passive presence to active engagement in the church community.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

What would the church be like if everyone shared together?

What are some wrong motivations we might have for church involvement? How might these be harmful?

How does understanding the grace and lordship of Jesus provide motivation to be involved in the life of the church?

How does the idea of a body help you understand your place in the church?

Discuss the seven actions that Paul highlights in Romans 12. Highlight any areas you feel represent a spiritual gift in or natural ability?

How can we make sure everything we do in church is loving?

What does it mean to serve the Lord enthusiastically? How is this effort different to any paid role you may do?

What can you do to be less of a consumer and more of a contributor in church?

Monday Devotion: Devoted to each other

Read: Acts 2:42-47

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit moved powerfully and many people began to follow Jesus. Suddenly the disciples had over 3,000 people with them.

These verses describe what happened next. They emphasize the quality of community the early church shared. They experienced fellowship (vs 42), shared meals (vs 42), met together (vs 44), shared everything they had (vs 44), met in homes (vs 46) and “shared meals with great joy and generosity” (vs 46).

This life together is shown through the Greek word for fellowship – *koinonia*. *Koinonia* is about more than just meeting together; it refers to the deep unity from the Holy Spirit, centred on the person of Jesus, which overflows into authentic and genuine affection for each other.

This is the kind of life that God wants for his people and one that we should be reaching for today.

Prayer Focus for Today:

- Pray that people would fight for unity in church rather than fight each other over disagreements.
- Pray that God would reveal someone he wants you to share a meal with.

Tuesday Devotion: Opening our lives

Read: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13

Paul shares here about his efforts to work with the church of Thessalonica. He made a special effort not to win them with flattery or pretend to be their friends (vs 5). Instead, he says, “We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God’s Good News but *our own lives too.*” (vs 8)

We live in a world where people are wary of others who might hurt them financially, emotionally, and mentally. As a result, they build up defences and barriers from people coming close to the vulnerable areas of their lives.

In contrast, we are to follow the example of Paul and wisely open our lives to each other. This means that we need to let down our boundaries and begin to allow people deeper into our lives.

One wise way to do this is to give a person one more level of vulnerability that you have trust in them. As they handle that well, you give them more trust, then more vulnerability, then more trust, going deeper a small step at a time.

Prayer Focus for Today:

- Ask God to show you a relationship where he is calling you to let down your barriers more.
- Pray for God to reveal a relationship where there has been a limit to trust and what has caused it.

Wednesday Devotion: The Importance of Care

Read: Matthew 25:31-46; James 1:26-27; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

In this, one of the most raw and challenging of Jesus' teachings, he compares two groups of people, the sheep and the goats. The sheep are those he wishes to bless and share eternity with. The goats are those who are cast into outer darkness.

The difference between the sheep and the goats is simply whether they cared for those who were needy or not. According to this teaching, to care for the poor is to care for Jesus; to neglect the poor is to neglect Jesus.

This should challenge us and inspire us to spend more time caring for the people in need around us. The inclusion of the most vulnerable in society in worship is fundamental to worshipping the One who protects the most vulnerable.

There are many ways we can do this, but the best place to start is with the relationships we have around us, looking to see the physical and emotional needs we can play a part in meeting. Think of someone today who is in need and prayerfully discover a way to help them.

Prayer Focus for Today:

- Pray for people in our congregation who are sick, asking God for healing.

Thursday Devotion: A Story of Two People

Read: Proverbs 11:24-25

There once were two people. The first was called Hoard and the second was called Share.

Hoard only had one rule: “If you want to grow rich, control your money.” He had financial spreadsheets and budgets; he tracked his money. He knew the costs of his bills and there were never any unforeseen expenses. Share was also quite smart with money. She was not frivolous with her spending, and she planned for the future.

Hoard and Share earned the same amount and from the outside their approaches looked similar. In fact, there was only one difference. Share was generous, Hoard was not.

When people would ask Hoard for help, he would apologise: “I’m sorry, I wish I could, but I’m not able to at the moment.” Share, however, wouldn’t even wait to be asked; instead she would regularly buy people meals, buy things people needed, and give random gifts of money.

One of these people found their wealth a joy and a blessing, one found it a difficulty and a curse. I’ll let you decide which.

Prayer Focus for Today:

- Pray that God would give us new visions for how we can meet needs in St Martins.

Friday Devotion: Going to the Next Level

Read Acts 18:24-19:7

We all need assistance to go to the next level in our ministry. As we develop a culture of helping each other this is the end goal. Here in Acts, we see two great examples of people who are more mature in the faith guiding and releasing those who still had some things to learn.

Apollos and the 12 disciples of John only had limited knowledge of the saving work of Jesus, yet they were committed to bringing that to others. Priscilla, Aquilla, and Paul were able to guide and direct these ones to new understandings of God and new ministry.

We have the opportunity in our church to get alongside others and increase their ministry ability. One great way to do this is by being involved with the youth and children's programmes we run through our church. They are the training ground of those who can do great and powerful things through God.

We also have the opportunity in our small groups and adult relationships to take people to a new level in ministry through support and encouragement.

Prayer Focus for Today:

- Pray that God would give us ways we can share together.
Giving generously to others as God has given to us.