

“Back to School: *Extracurricular Activities*”
October 25, 2015

Welcome/Opening Prayer

Introduction

For Christians, extracurricular activities take the form of service and ministry. The following words were spoken to the ancient people of God:

“Now, people of Israel, listen to what the LORD your God demands of you: Worship the LORD and do all that he commands. Love him and serve him with all your heart.”
(Deuteronomy 10:12 GNT)

The Apostle Paul said to the Romans:

“Now you belong to him...in order that you might be useful in the service of God. (Romans 7:4 TEV)

According to the Bible, every Christian is a minister, and every believer is to serve. We are all called to full-time Christian service.

1. What does a full-time Christian servant look like?
2. Why is a non-serving Christian a contradiction in terms?

The Methodist denomination agrees with this point of view:

“All Christians are called through their baptism to a ministry of servanthood in the world...”
(*UM Book of Discipline*, paragraph 125)

“The ministry of all Christians is both a gift and a task. The gift is God’s unmerited grace; the task is unstinting (generous, benevolent) service.” (*UM Book of Discipline*, paragraph 128)

Two things are required to minister as the Lord’s servants. First of all, we must recognize our ministry as a “gift.” Second, we must carry out the “task” we are given.

3. What does it mean that ministry is a “gift”?

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren uses an acrostic that helps us determine our SHAPE for ministry.

Break It Down

1) Understand your SHAPE

Unwrap your SPIRITUAL GIFTS

According to the New Testament, God gives believers “spiritual gifts,” and everyone gets at

least one.

“The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others.” (1 Corinthians 12:7 CEV)

These spiritual gifts are divinely-empowered, supernatural abilities we receive as Christ’s followers (see gift lists in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). They may be related to, but are not necessarily, natural talents. They are not given to us for our own personal benefit, but rather to serve others.

One way to discover your spiritual gifts is by trying various areas of service and ministry. Look and listen for confirmation (i.e. positive comments, fruit).

1. Describe a time when you tried a ministry that was probably not your spiritual gift.
2. Describe a time when you tried a ministry that was definitely your spiritual gift.

Listen to your HHEART

Your heart represents your passions.

“...Serve the Lord with all your heart.” (1 Samuel 12:20b NIV)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.” (Colossians 3:23 GNT)

1. What ministry really excites you? What act of service brings you fulfillment?

Here are a couple of ways to determine when you’re serving God with all your heart:

A.) Enthusiasm

- When you’re doing what you love to do, no one has to motivate you or challenge you or check up on you. You enjoy it.
- You don’t need rewards or applause or payment because you are thrilled by the opportunity to serve.

B.) Effectiveness

- When you’re doing what God wired you to do, you get good at it.
- When your heart is not in something, you won’t care how it gets done.

Apply your AABILITIES

You receive spiritual gifts when you are “born again,” but abilities are natural talents that you are born with (given to believers and unbelievers alike).

“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.” (Romans 12:6 NLT)

Here are some abilities mentioned in Scripture: artistic ability, administering, baking, boat-making, carpentry, debating, designing, embalming, embroidering, engraving, farming, fishing, gardening, inventing, leading, making music, making weapons, managing, masonry, needle work, painting, planting, poetry, sailing, selling, soldiering, teaching, writing.

“God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other...” (1 Peter 4:10 LB)

1. Think about your current occupation or abilities. How do you use them for God’s glory?
2. What are some more ways you can use them for God and for His people?
3. What are some challenges you must overcome in using them for God?

Whatever you’re able to do, God wants you to do for Him and His people.

Use your PERSONALITY

God has created us each in a unique fashion.

“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)

Your personality effects how and where you will use your gifts and talents (e.g. evangelism for an extrovert looks different than evangelism for an introvert).

1. Discuss how your personality complements your gifts and talents.

When we are ministering in a way that fits our shape, it feels right.

Employ your EXPERIENCES

Since God is sovereign, He can use anything and everything for His purposes. God wants to use everything you’ve ever been through – family, educational, vocational, spiritual, ministry, and even painful experiences. Sometimes your greatest hurts will grow into your greatest ministry.

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” (2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT)

1. What makes using our painful experiences as a ministry difficult?
2. How can we overcome these difficulties?
3. Describe a person you know who has used his/her experiences to grow into their greatest ministry.

2) Utilize your SHAP

If you don’t utilize your gifts and talents God has given you, He may take them away. It’s why Paul told his young protégé, Timothy:

“Be sure to use the abilities God has given you...Put these abilities to work.” (1 Timothy 4:14-15 LB)

1. Discuss the idea that God may take away the gifts and talents He has given you if you do not utilize them.
2. Look at the list below and talk about ministries you are currently involved in and how you are utilizing your SHAPE.
3. Look at the list below and think about a ministry you are not currently serving in and how it would utilize your SHAPE.

Radical Hospitality

“The active, over-the-top desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they may find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ.”

Greeters	Guest services, including welcome center
Ushers	Parking lot attendants
Care-giving (i.e., visiting sick, shut-ins, Labor of Love)	Contacting inactive members

Passionate Worship

“Worship that connects people to God and one another...where people experience the life-changing presence of God in the presence of others.”

Media team (sound, video presentation)	Creative set design
Choir members	Musicians

Intentional Faith Development

“High-quality learning experiences that help people understand Scripture, faith, and life in the supportive nurture of caring relationships.

School School teachers	Life group leaders and hosts/hostesses
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Risk-Taking Mission and Service

“The projects, efforts, and work people do to make a positive difference in the lives of others for the purposes of Christ...involves extraordinary opportunities for life-changing engagement with people.”

Hardly Able (wheelchair ramp construction)	Community Breakfast (Saturdays at FUMC, PC)
Community Dinner at McKenzie Park (4 th Thursday)	Pumpkin Patch and other mission fundraisers
Mission team members	

Extravagant Generosity

“Practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations...describes lavish sharing, sacrifice, and giving in service to God and neighbor.

Money counters	Photographers/videographers
Office assistants (mailings, receptionists)	

Fusion

Front desk (especially weeknights)	Equipment maintenance
Cleaning	Organizing sports teams and leagues

Close In Prayer