

(A Spiritual Leader) 5. Balanced by the Body of Christ

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the necessity of recognizing one's unique ministry within the Body of Christ and the importance of collaboration to achieve spiritual balance and effectiveness.

Scripture: Matthew 9:12, Luke 6:26, John 17:6, 1 Corinthians 12:4, 1 Corinthians 12:12

Topics: "Body Of Christ", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of recognizing our imbalances in ministry and finding balance by working together with other members in the Body of Christ, each with different gifts and callings. Just as a hospital has various departments to cater to different needs, the Body of Christ has a variety of ministries and spiritual gifts to help people. It is crucial to understand our specific calling in the Body and cooperate with others to fulfill all that God wants to accomplish. The success of our ministry should not be judged by popularity or statistics, but by faithfulness to the unique ministry God has entrusted to us in Christ's Body.

Transcript

A spiritual leader will recognise that his ministry is imbalanced. So he will find his balance in the ministry of other members in the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ can be compared to a hospital. When a man is sick and goes to a hospital, the hospital has various departments to help him. Perhaps he needs an injection, or physiotherapy, or surgery. He may need to visit the eye doctor or the ear doctor. So the hospital has various departments. The eye doctor spends all his time just looking at people's eyes and nothing else. That's not because he feels that other parts of the human body are unimportant, but because his specialty is the eye.

In the Body of Christ too, each believer has a different gift and calling. And each one is imbalanced by himself. The only perfectly balanced person Who ever walked on this earth was the Lord Jesus Christ. All the rest of us - even the best among us - are imbalanced. We can find our balance only as we work together with other brothers and sisters - with the other departments in the Lord's hospital. So there's no place for individualism in this hospital!

A good hospital will have many departments to cater to the various needs of people. In the same way, the Body of Christ too has a variety of ministries and many spiritual gifts to help people. No church or group

has all the gifts of the Spirit. But in the total body of Christ, they are all there.

We must know what our own specific calling in the Body is.

The world is full of spiritually sick people. And nobody's case is hopeless. Everyone can be fully healed by the Lord. This is the good news of the gospel that we proclaim. The worst sinner and the most perverted person can find healing in the Lord's hospital. A good hospital will never turn away a seriously sick person. Inferior hospitals do that because they are not equipped to handle serious cases. In the same way, a good church will never tell even the greatest sinner in the world that his case is hopeless! A good church will be able to change the worst of sinners into the greatest of saints - if the sinner is willing to take the treatment given.

We can compare the church to a human body too. In the human body, each part has a function; and that part concentrates on fulfilling its own function alone. But it appreciates, values and cooperates with the other parts that have different functions. That's how it must be when we work together with other ministries in the Body of Christ too.

In 1 Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit uses the example of eyes, ears, hands and feet to picture the way the gifts of the Spirit are exercised in the body of Christ.

When you hear me speak, you'll find me emphasizing certain things from the Bible over and over again. That's because that is the burden the Lord has given me. I've stuck to the ministry the Lord has called me to, because I know that is the only ministry in which I can be useful to the Lord. I'll frustrate the Lord's plan for me if I try to do something else. But I'm not against other ministries. I value them highly. The stomach values the hand highly, but it never tries to do what the hand does. For example, it never tries to pick up food from a plate. It allows the hand to do that and then does its own job of digesting the food that the hand picks up and sends down to it! That's a picture of how we complement each other in Christ's Body.

Most believers haven't seen this truth of the variety of ministries in the Body. But if you don't see this truth, you'll never be able to fulfil all that God wants to accomplish.

It's good for all of us to be clear in our own minds as to what God has called us to. The burden the Lord gives us in our hearts is usually an indication of the ministry He has for us in His Body.

As far as I'm concerned, it has been crystal clear to me for many years now, what MY ministry in the Body is and also what God wants me to emphasize in my ministry. That clarity has produced great rest in my life and great liberty as well. No-one can now move me away from my ministry - even if they accuse me of being imbalanced!

No prophet in the Old Testament was ever balanced in his ministry. Only diplomatic preachers seek to be "balanced". The prophets were all imbalanced. They kept stressing the same thing over and over again - because that was the need of Israel or Judah in their generation - and that was what God laid on their hearts as a burden.

I'm not saying that all of us can know, as soon as we begin serving the Lord, what our gift and calling is. It took me about 15 years after I was born again, before I was clear as to what my ministry was. It may not take that long for you. It may take much less. You'll have to leave the timing with God. But you must understand this clearly that you have a distinct and unique ministry in Christ's Body that no-one else can fulfil. And that ministry will never be a balanced one. It will be imbalanced. You'll have to find your balance

by working in fellowship with others who have different ministries in the Body. That's the way God keeps us humble - by making us dependent on others. Praise the Lord!

All of us are strong in some areas of our life, but weak in other areas - just like a student may be good in English and weak in Maths. But we must know where we are weak and strengthen those areas. Your church may be strong in its emphasis on evangelism but weak in its emphasis on holiness. If so, then you know what type of ministry your church needs to expose itself to.

Never judge the success of your labours by your popularity. Jesus pronounced a woe on all those who were "popular" with the people, because that was the identifying mark of a false prophet (Luke 6:26). So if you're a very popular preacher you could be a false prophet! On the other hand, Jesus told His disciples to rejoice when everyone spoke against them, because that was one of the marks of a true prophet (Lk.6:22,23).

Do you really believe what Jesus said here?

Remember that every true prophet in Israel's history and in church history was a controversial figure, who was hounded and hated and falsely accused by the religious leaders of his time.

There has not been a single exception to this rule - whether it be Elijah and Jeremiah in Old Testament times, or John the Baptist and Paul in the first century, or John Wesley and Watchman Nee in more modern times.

So we should never gauge the eternal success of our labours by how popular we are!

We shouldn't gauge the success of our labours by statistics either - by how many people raised their hands in our meetings or how many people we preached to etc.,

Going by statistics, we would have to say that Jesus' ministry was a total failure, because at the end of His ministry, He had only 11 men to present to His Father (John 17). But the success of His ministry was seen in the type of people those eleven disciples were! They were worth far more to God, and could accomplish more for God, than eleven million of today's half-hearted, money-loving, compromising, worldly "believers".

I've felt that if I could produce eleven people of the calibre of those first apostles, in my whole life, my ministry would be a glorious success. But it's not easy to produce even two or three such people. It is far easier to gather a crowd of worldly compromisers who "believe in Jesus", but who do not love Him with ALL their hearts.

In every movement that God started in Christendom during the last 20 centuries, decline set in by the time it entered the second generation and it no longer remained the same vibrant, fiery movement that it was when started by its founder. Why?

One reason was that the second generation began to be taken up with numbers. They thought that their increasing in number was the proof that God was blessing them.

But the fastest growing groups in the world in recent years have been the cults and fundamentalist-groups of other religions. What does that prove? Just this - that numerical growth is no proof of God's blessing.

God calls us to concentrate on the ministry He has given us in Christ's Body and at the same time, to work in cooperation with others who have different ministries. It is impossible to evaluate accurately the results of our ministry, because we are part of a team - the Body of Christ.

All we need to ensure therefore is that we are faithful to the task God has given us to fulfil.

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