

New Day A Place Where You Can Participate

When Michael Jordan re-entered the NBA in 2001, with the Washington Wizards. In one pre-season game, Jordan's teammates stood around and waited for him to perform. The following day, Jordan and Coach Doug Collins put a stop to that. So, they put in place a new and unusual rule that was enforced during all of their pre-season games: a no-shooting rule for Jordan. Jordan said; "Everybody wants to sit back and watch. But one [reason] why we became successful in Chicago was...we had to play as a unit instead of just watching. What makes me more effective is other guys stepping up and being a threat. If I'm the only threat, then I'm doing all the work. Obviously that's not going to work." Jordan held fast to the no-shoot rule, his teammates had to be involved in the offense. If they had an open shot and didn't take it but instead passed to Jordan, he would pass the ball back to them and would not shoot until they got involved in the game.

Sometimes, as Christians we are like that – acting as spectators when God has called us to be participants. Just try to imagine with me what would happen if every member, of every church, was fully involved in the work of ministry? The results would be phenomenal; communities would be transformed and there would not be enough room in all the Churches in America for all the people attending Church on Sunday mornings.

The New Day Dream is that we will become a place where every person that is a part of New Day Community will become involved, will participate in ministry.

You see we believe that when we discover what our ministry is and begin doing ministry we will find more fulfillment than we have ever known before.

So, this morning I want to give us three basic reasons why every one of us needs to be involved in ministering to others.

First, We Are Created for Ministry

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "Why am I here?" If so, you're not alone – because many of us have asked God that question.

What I want to make clear today is that each of us was created by God to be involved in ministering to others.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." NIV

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." NLT

Ephesians 2:10 "God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do." TEV

Now, there are two essential truths in this verse that are important for us today:

1. We Are God's Masterpiece

God has made us or created us to be involved in ministry. One of the purposes of our existence is that we were made to be involved in showing people all around us that God loves them, that He can change their lives and that He can use them to impact Champaign County and beyond with His message of salvation.

2. We Are Created to Minister

God has empowered us through our SHAPE and through the Holy Spirit to be involved in ministry. God designed us the way that we are because He had a plan for our lives. God's plan goes way beyond us making money, having a home and a car. God's plan for us is one that includes creating us to minister to people in His name and for His glory.

Spiritual Gifts
Heart
Abilities
Personality
Experiences

You see, once we understand that these two truths apply to every Christian we begin to look at ourselves differently. If we run from these truths, we will find ourselves becoming more and more uncomfortable in our faith and in our relationship with God and others.

Discussions: What are some ministries that we currently have? What are some that we could add in the next few months?

Second, We Are Gifted for Ministry

I've mentioned this a couple of times recently as I've described our SHAPE; not only does God create us to be involved in ministry, but He has also given at least one spiritual gift to every Christian that we can use to minister to others.

1 Peter 4:10-11 "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." NIV

1 Peter 4:10-11 "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹ Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen." NLT

Now, that is not an exhaustive list – it is just a sample of the variety of Spiritual Gifts that God has made available to the Church through His people. The emphasis in these verses is that each of us needs to understand that God has gifted us and that we need to be involved in ministering to others. When we are using our gifts in ministry the Church functions properly, people are reached for Christ and the person using their gift grows in their faith and in their relationship with God.

The New Day Dream is that we will become a place where we are all discovering our SHAPE, ministering to people and impacting Champaign County and beyond with God's love.

You see we believe a couple of things about being gifted for ministry. First, we believe that God has gifted our Church with all the gifts that are necessary at this present time to accomplish what He has called us to do. As we grow and are moving towards the fulfillment of the dream God will bring in the gifts that are needed at that point in time.

The other thing we believe about being gifted for ministry is that God expects us to manage our gifts. In other words, we need to try out our gifts in ministry. We may try a certain type of ministry and feel like a failure, but then try another type of ministry and feel like a success. Both types of ministry may have required the same gifts, but our personality, our experiences didn't fit well with one, but did fit well with the other one.

A part of our SHAPE is for us to understand that as a Christian, God has gifted us for ministry.

Discussion: What are some spiritual gifts that you see active in our Church?

What can you do that would expand our usage of Spiritual gifts?

Third, We Are Needed in Ministry

1 Corinthians 12:27 **“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” NIV**

1 Corinthians 12:27 **“All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.” NLT**

The issue of ministry is not if you went to Bible College or Seminary; whether you were raised in church or not, or what your social standing is in the community. The issue of ministry is a realization that no matter who you are you are needed in the work of the ministry of the church. Every Christian has an important part. Every person here that has asked Jesus Christ into their lives has a place in the ministry of New Day Community.

There are people already in your life that God has placed there that need you to minister to them. We have people at work, school, in our neighborhood, friends, family members – people that you and I were created in the way that we were so that God can use us to reach them. We may reach them by inviting them to Church. We may reach them through starting a small group. We may reach them by helping them with some projects around their house. We may reach them by visiting them at the hospital, sharing with them after a tragedy. Who knows all the possibilities of how God may want to use us to minister to the people that He has placed in our lives.

You see, God's Word shows us that we are not here by accident. Not only are we not born by accident, but we don't become a part of a Church by accident either. God's vision for New Day Community requires us all and many others like us and different than us. God needs men and women, teens and children from all walks of life. God needs people of all races, financial status and educational backgrounds to accomplish the dream and He has put us together to accomplish. Since that is true – no one gets a free pass. What I mean by that is that God needs all of us currently associated with New Day to do our part in the ministry of the Church so that we can begin reaching the people that will be needed to see the next phases of the New Day Dream becoming a reality.

God needs you, He needs me, He needs all of us. We are all needed in ministry.

Application: What do you need to do that will help you get involved in the ministry of New Day Community?