Fil-Am Community Church
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Key Verse: Ephesians 4:11-12

“A Church that Involves You”

Good morning Fil-Am Church it is so good to see you here this morning, today we are continuing with the series “What Kind of Church is this?” and we are going to deal with the specific topic of “A Church that involves you.”

So without Further Aude, let us get into the Word of God, more importantly let us get the Word of God into you!

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NASB)

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

I was looking at illustrations and ran across the below and thought it fits into the message today, there was a billboard outside a country church that said:

What is missing?

CH__CH;

UR!

Saints the church is not complete without "U"!

Past negative experiences with church often cause people to view the church as a whole in a negative light. This is both tragic and unnecessary.

If you were hurt by a church a Pastor or someone from within a church in the past, GET OVER IT!

Here is a funny/sad story I ran across the other day about why one person stopped going to Ball games but also the same reasons for stop going to church.

• Whenever I go to a game, they ask for money.
• The other fans don't care about me.
• The seats are too hard.
• Coach never visits me.
• The referee makes calls I disagree with.
• Some of the games go into overtime and make me late for dinner.
• The band plays songs I don’t know.
• I have other things to do at game time.
• My parents took me to too many games when I was growing up.
• I know more than the coaches do anyway.
• I can be just as good a fan at the lake.
• I won’t take my kids to a game either. They must choose for themselves what teams to follow.

We can see it is very humorous and yet sadly a little true as well.

A good church can be one of the greatest joys of your life. It is also absolutely essential to being a faithful and productive Christian.

Can you be a Christian without going to church? A key question here is, why would a truly Born Again person not want to be part of the church that his Lord died for?

Modern Religion focuses on Filling Churches with People.
The True Gospel emphasizes on Filling People with God!

1 John 3:14 says that one of the signs of a true believer is love for his Christian brothers.

1 John 3:14 (NASB)

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

We naturally want to be around those we love. In contrast, one sign of someone who is withdrawing from Christian fellowship (1 John 2:19).

1 John 2:19 (NASB)

19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

Do you ever watch nature documentaries on TV? When a lion stalks a heard of gazelles, did you ever notice the one he goes after? The one who strays from the herd.
The Greek word for church is "ekklesia" meaning "called out ones".

That is a very special thing, to be one whom God has called out of the world, to be part of His Family! "

Ekklesia" also means "assembly" or "congregation".

This is how God has organized His family in the earth, through local congregations which are to be earthly representations of His Heavenly Kingdom.

Jesus Himself was the one who ordained and commissioned the church (Matthew 16:18).

Matthew 16:18 (NASB)

18 I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

One of the Biblical names for the church is the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NASB)

27 Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

This is such a beautiful analogy. Ephesians 4:16 describes the Body as being joined together, with each member supplied.

Ephesians 4:16 (NASB)

16 “From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Consequentially, if you are not joined to His Body, you will not be supplied.

You will be like a severed limb, or a coal that is removed from a fire, and quickly burns out.

In every occasion that the New Testament records a person giving his heart to Jesus, the person’s being added to the church immediately follows. A Christian who is not part of a local church is a totally foreign concept to Scripture. In fact, most of the New Testament Epistles were originally written to local congregations.

Biblical church membership is much more than simply putting your name on a roll and warming a pew on Sunday morning.
It is a solemn covenant which involves...
- Faithful commitment in attendance
- Faithful commitment in in tithing and giving,
- Faithful commitment in serving in helps ministry
- Faithful commitment in and cooperation with the church’s leadership

Is the church perfect? No, because it is made up of imperfect people-like us.

That is one of the reasons we need the church. Like iron sharpens iron, God's people are to help "sharpen" each other (Proverbs 27:17).

The church is something to be embraced and cherished.

You need the church, and the church needs you.

Jesus...
- Died for His church (Acts 20:28),
- He is returning for His church (Ephesians 5:27),
- It is His church that will rule and reign with Him (Revelation 22:1-5).

When Michael Jordan re-entered the NBA in 2001, there was a new and unusual rule enforced during a Washington Wizards basketball scrimmage: a no-shooting rule for Jordan.

In one exhibition match, Jordan's teammates stood around and waited for him to perform. The following day, Jordan and Coach Doug Collins put a stop to that.

Michael 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, even with the outcome of the scrimmage on the line. He was passed the ball with his team trailing by one and less than five seconds left, but he didn't take the open shot and passed the ball back.

Sometimes I wonder how many Christians are like that, sometimes just acting as spectators of the ministry, when God has called them to be participants.

Have you ever wondered what would happen if every member, of every church, was fully
involved in the work of ministry? 

What would that look like? The results would be phenomenal! Here at our church, we want to involve every member in the work of ministry. Because when you discover what your ministry is and begin doing ministry in this local church context you will find more fulfillment than you’ve ever known before.

Let me give you four basic reasons why each of us needs to be involved:

1. I AM CREATED FOR MINISTRY

Have you ever asked yourself the question, “Why did God put me here on earth?” If so, you’re not alone, because most of us have asked the same thing from time to time.

The good news is that God is very clear, he is not confused at all and knows exactly why each of us have been created, or perhaps I should say recreated in Jesus Christ specifically to do works of ministry.

**2 Timothy 1:9 (NASB)**

9 “Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.”

**Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)**

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

There are two fundamental truths in this passage that are important for us today:

- You are God’s Masterpiece (God has fashioned you)
- You are a Minister (God has empowered you)

Once you understand that these two truths apply to your personal situation you begin looking at yourself and you’re calling a little bit differently.

If you run from these two truths you will find yourself becoming increasingly uncomfortable with your faith, with your church, and with your Christian relationships.

Why? Because you are trying to be a person that God has not created you to be, you are putting a square block in a round hole.

This is not something to run away from, but to run to, because it is in the discovery and
implementation of these truths that we finally find fulfillment.

The first point was I am CREATED for MINISTRY
The second point is...

2. I AM GIFTED FOR MINISTRY

Not only does God create us for ministry, He also gives us at least one spiritual gift so that we can function in that ministry at the highest and best level.

1 Peter 4:10-11 (NASB)

10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The emphasis here is that each of us needs to be fully involved in the area of ministry that God has gifted us for.

When we are not each using our spiritual gifts in the work of the local church, the church suffers, and those that are not using their gifts suffer too.

Think about it this way, What happens in your life when one part of your body stops functioning? You get sick and you may die if one part of your body doesn't function.

If you're a Christian that means you're part of the body of Christ. If you're not functioning it makes the rest of us sick, it makes an unhealthy body.

What if one day you got a phone call from your liver? And your liver said, "I don't feel like functioning this year. I just want to be fed."

What if your heart called up or your gall bladder or spleen and said, "I don't feel like functioning in the body this year. I just want to be fed."

A non-functioning body part is not doing its job, not pulling its weight, not serving its function.

The strength of our church is not found in the Pastors. It is in the lay Ministers of this church that understand the necessity of using their spiritual gifts in ministry.

Philippians 2:13 (NASB)
“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

The first point was I am CREATED for MINISTRY
The second point was I am GIFTED for MINISTRY, The third point is...

3. I AM NEEDED FOR MINISTRY

Romans 12:1 (NASB)

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

An elderly widow, restricted in her activities, was still eager to serve Christ. After praying about this, she realized that she could bring blessing to others by playing the piano.

The next day she placed this small advertisement in the Oakland Tribune, “Pianist will play hymns by phone daily for those who are sick and despondent, the service is FREE.”

The notice included a number to dial. When people called, she would ask, what hymn would you like to hear? Within a few months her playing had brought cheer to several hundred people.

Many of them freely poured out their hearts to her, and she was able to help encourage them.

Who among us is qualified to minister?
Who among us even knows what to do?
Not you, not me, without the help of the Holy Spirit.
I have said it many times in the past but what is the difference between me and the worst sinner in the world? (Christ, that’s all)

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NASB)

“Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

The issue surrounding involvement is not how much Bible training you have, or whether you were raised in church or not, or what your social standing is in the community.

The issue here is a realization that no matter who you are you are needed in the work of the ministry of the church.

There is going to be some little boy or little girl, or some confused soul walking our streets that is going to have his/her life changed because you came to the realization that God needs you to have an active role in His church.
Don’t let anybody ever tell you that you are not needed in the church of Jesus Christ, you are an integral part of what we do as a church, **YOU ARE NEEDED!**

The first point was I am CREATED for MINISTRY
The second point was I am GIFTED for MINISTRY
The third point was I am NEEDED for MINISTRY, The last point is...

4. **I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MINISTRY**

**Romans 14:12 (NASB)**

12 “So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”

When Queen Victoria was a child, she didn't know she was in line for the throne of England. Her instructors, trying to prepare her for the future, were frustrating because they couldn't motivate her.

She just didn't take her studies seriously. Finally, her teachers decided to tell her that one day she would become the Queen of England.

Upon hearing this, Victoria quietly said, “Then I will be good.”

The realization that she had inherited this high calling, gave her a sense of responsibility that profoundly affected her conduct from then on.

**1 Peter 2:9 (NASB)**

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

There is a story that's been told about four people named...

*Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.*

There was an important job to do and *Everybody* was asked to do it. *Everybody* was sure *Somebody* would do it. *Anybody* could have done it, but *Nobody* did it. *Somebody* got angry because it was *Everybody*’s job. *Everybody* thought *Anybody* would do it, But *Nobody* realized that *Everybody* wouldn't do it.

It ended up that *Everybody* blamed *Somebody* when *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have done.
The fact is that none of us are responsible for every work of ministry, but we are responsible for the area of ministry that God has given to us.

*Ephesians 4:1 (NASB)*

4 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Imagine that you were the first one to get this letter from Paul and you had slacked off in your responsibility of involvement.

He is writing you from a prison cell where he is doing time because of his involvement in ministry and he bids you to be willing to give your life to the cause.

I have tried, but it is really hard for me to work up a bunch of sympathy for people that tell me they are too busy to get involved in the work of the church.

Saints I am not saying that just because I’m one of your Pastor’s, I felt the same way when I attended church before ever becoming a pastor.

Here I have Paul going to prison and eventually being executed for His involvement, I see the example of the early church in Acts laying it all on the line in the same way, I see that men, women, and children for 2,000 years have given up everything they had to serve Jesus Christ and it is very hard for me, looking at them to say, “Sorry, I just can’t get involved,” or, “I worked hard in the Marine Corps for Thirty years but I’m retired now so it’s my turn to sit back and let others do the work.”

*Mark 8:34-35 (NASB)*

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself; and take up his cross and follow Me. 35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

Some years ago a former American Astronaut took over as head of a major airline, determined to make the airlines service the best in the industry.

One day, as the New President walked through a particular department, he saw and employee resting his feet on a desk while the telephone rang and rang continually.

The New President said, “Aren’t you going to answer that phone?’ the boss demanded?”

“This is not my department, answered the employee nonchalantly, apparently not recognizing his new Boss, I work in maintenance, he replied.”
“Not anymore you don’t, snapped the President!”

In this church we are not going to apologize for asking people to give their all to the cause of Jesus Christ, if we were to do that we would cease being the church.

I love the bumper Sticker that says God wants Full Custody not just weekend visitation!

Jesus says that true life is only experienced when we fulfill our calling to serve. It is only when we give our life as an offering of service that we begin to understand what the kingdom of God is really all about.

You are responsible before God, and I am responsible before God, for what we do with the responsibility of ministry that He has given to us.

Here is one more illustration that helps explain the attitude within the American Church.

I believe that the real difference in the American church is not between conservatives and liberals, fundamentalists and charismatics, or Republicans and Democrats.

The real difference is between the aware and the unaware.

When somebody is aware of the love that the Father has for Jesus, that person is spontaneously grateful.

Cries of thankfulness become the dominant characteristic of the interior life, and the byproduct of gratitude is joy.

- We’re not joyful
- And then become grateful
- We’re grateful, and that makes us joyful.

I would like to ask you this morning are you aware or unaware? Hopefully today you will have a better understanding that you were

- Created for Ministry
- Gifted for Ministry
- Needed for Ministry
- Responsible for Ministry

What is stopping you from becoming more involved, what is keeping you from progressing to the next level?
If you have a need, a hurt, a concern, would like to spend a little time talking with Jesus today you are in the right place.

Let us Pray!