

# Committed to Functional Membership

## Intro

Rom 12.1-8

- One of the greatest threats to functional membership as defined in Scripture is the modern idol of consumerism.
- God's Word stands against consumerism, calling every believer to a life of worship, to a place of equipping, and to a role of serving, so that His mission and His Kingdom is seen to be our preoccupation.

## Putting the church to work

Rom 12.3 "For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you ..."

### ***Where does Paul's call to function begin?***

vs.1 – "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God" or "in view of God's mercy"...

John 13:13-15 "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

1 Peter 2:21 "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."

- "Roman church, you've seen God's radical humility and self-sacrifice, now imitate it."

## **Ancient persecution, the modern circus, & the fading of functional membership**

- When people considered joining the church in the early years, they had to reckon with the idea that it *would* bring persecution and it *could* bring death.
- The modern church is facing a totally different set of challenges – not being killed from without, but being diluted from within.

▶ **One BIG ordination service**

## Three essentials for functional membership

### I. Living for the glory of God

I Cor 10.31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Rom 12.1-2

#### Consumerism vs. Christ’s all-consuming claims

Col 1:16-23

- Paul teaches us that we are twice-claimed - by Christ the Creator and Christ the Redeemer.

I Cor 6.19b “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

- The moment we start thinking that God’s saving action in our lives necessitates self-denial – the revoking of our “rights” as consumer and self-sovereign – we are starting to see a very important aspect of what biblical Christianity is all about.
- Consumerism touches the church’s attendance roster, offering plate, and sign-up list. God wants to touch them too. What gives?

[FUNCTIONAL MEMBERSHIP INVOLVES SEEING THE IMPORTANCE OF SERVING, WORKING, RELATING, AND GROWING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.]

### 2. Valuing the corporate gathering

- The Christian life is more than attending a meeting, but it isn’t less.
  - Heb 10.23 – *coming* to the church
  - Matt 28 .18 – *going* to the world
  - Acts 2.47 - the Lord *adds to* the church
  - John 20.21 - the Lord *sends from* the church

Heb 10.23 “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

## Hebrews vs. the *emerging* proposals

- Today, due to the leaven of consumerism, it's becoming increasingly important to contend for the vital place of the corporate gathering in the life of the believer.

### ▶ The most important thing happening on Sunday

[FUNCTIONAL MEMBERSHIP INVOLVES VALUING THE GATHERING WHICH EXISTS TO GLORIFY GOD, STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH, INFORM OUR DECISIONS, AND EMBOLDEN OUR WITNESS.]

## 3. Using your gifts to build up and to reach out

**“The church’s service has three goals: to serve God in worship; to serve one another in nurture; and to serve the world in mission.”**

– Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, p.65

Rom 12.3-21

1 Pet 4.10-11 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace; whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies – in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

**“In advancing the work of the Spirit, we cannot sharply separate natural gifts from spiritual gifts. Both come from the Creator Spirit. There is a difference between those abilities that have been ours from childhood and new gifts that surprise us in service. Yet even our spiritual gifts are often renewed and heightened forms of natural gifts.... We discover the gifts he supplies and earnestly pray for greater ones, not to enhance our role but to get the job done – to reach a neighbor, teach a child, feed the hungry, counsel the confused, correct the erring, save a marriage, to endure and even befriend a boss.”**

–Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, p.66

- In short, functional ministry means that you see yourself as a full-time minister (within the church) and a full-time missionary (outside of the church).

**“The missio Dei precedes the church, and so the issue is not where to bring or take God but to find God where he is working and to participate in redemption according to God-given skills and abilities. ‘The starting point for mission is that God is a missionary God who is active in the world. God invites and beckons us to join his mission. So in this sense, we join in with what God is doing rather than taking God with us.’”**

-Gibbs & Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, p. 52

► **The mission, the tribe, and finding your beat**

[FUNCTIONAL MEMBERSHIP INVOLVES COMMITTING OUR RESOURCES, TIME, GIFTS AND ABILITIES FOR BUILDING UP THE CHURCH AND REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY.]

### **Our Covenant Commitment**

*I agree that being a member of the Body of Christ means that God has ordained for me to function in the body and to serve the body (1Co 12, Eph 4, 1Pet 3:10). I therefore commit to seek to discover how God has called me to serve and to grow in faithfulness and effectiveness in fulfilling that call.*

*I agree that God calls me to further His work of making disciples. I therefore commit to embrace the responsibility to share the gospel and to do what I can to help others grow in their relationship with Christ (Matt 28:18-19).*

*I agree that God calls me to pray for His will to come to pass in and through the church (Matt 6:5-14; 1Tim 2:1-8; Heb 13:18). I therefore commit to make personal and corporate prayer a priority in my life, so that God's will for me and through me is accomplished.*

*I agree that God calls me to support the mission of the church from the finances He has provided in my life. I therefore commit to follow the biblical pattern of giving on a regular basis as the Lord provides for me and to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading for me to consider additional sacrificial giving.*