

Sermon Series: “Strengthening Your Grip” — Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—5/12/2002

Title: “Strengthening Your Grip on Involvement”

Text: Acts 2: 42-47 & 1 Corinthians 12: 20-27

Intro.: Skit: *The Fence Sitter* by Donna Lagerquist

Theme: The Christian Church and our Christian faith is not a spectator sport. Rather, called out of our old way of self-centered living into the Christ-centered living of service, we look for ways to build and expand the Body of Christ.

### *The Biblical perspective on what it means to be part of the Body of Christ*

?? It is corporate not individualistic

1. Nowhere in Old or New Testament does God promote his child or his people in isolation
2. The church is not the sum of its part but greater than parts in nature/power/purpose when drawn together under Jesus
3. **Ills.: Accomplishing the Impossible**

?? It is accountable not independent

1. “*The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"* 1C12:21
2. **Lone-ranger - ism** is both dangerous and careless — it thinks too highly of itself and not enough of others

?? It is responsible not unreliable

3. **PRINT AND READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 22-27**
4. **Ills.: Michael Jordan on Team Work**
5. Each member of Christ’s body has his directions from Christ and his ministry opportunity from the rest of the Body

### *Shaping your attitude and action toward Biblical involvement*

?? It is nurtured by being **WORD-BASED** (*they devoted themselves to the apostles teachings vs. 42*)

1. If your involvement is not **Word-view in perspective, Word-instructed, Word-directed**, selfish, often mean-spirit actions are undertaken in the name of Christ but if **Word based** you are fully equipped for every good work.
2. “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*” 2 Tim. 3: 16-17

?? It is committed to and cemented together by being **SPIRITUALLY RELATIONAL** (*they devoted themselves to . . . the fellowship and to the breaking of the bread vs. 42*)

1. Early Christians never saw themselves as individuals but as community  
?? Koinonia = participant—an active participation within the community  
?? **ILLS.: BEE HIVES**
2. The regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper becomes focal point of our “one-minded” community in Christ  
?? Cannot stand unreconciled together and come together to the “breaking of bread”  
?? “Washed in Lamb’s blood” at the meal to have power to pick up the task and serve others when exhausted

?? It is empowered by being **BATHED IN SUPERNATURAL PRAYER** (*they devoted themselves to . . . prayer . . . Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. vs. 42-43*)

3. Praying for and expecting miracles for the overwhelming task of carrying out the ministry and mission of Christ
4. **Ills.: ‘God-things’ in our early days as Lord of Life**

?? It is formed to be **INTENTIONALLY OTHER-CENTERED** (**PRINT AND READ. VSS. 44-45**)

5. Jesus said, “*I did not come to be served but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many.*” Mark 10: 45
6. Sharing together our “common” blessings of time, energy, resources, care, goods,

7. Doing that because we are of “*one mind*” with Christ and with each other as part of the Body of Christ  
?? It is lived out in the ***RHYTHM OF COMING AND GOING (PRINT AND READ VSS. 46-47)***
8. Coming together to celebrate Jesus and serve one another  
?? The early Christians found large corporate worship and small group intimacy/fellowship as vital  
?? **Ills.: The Dalla Airport Hub model of Christian gathering**  
?? We need to come together to celebrate a God and a faith which is bigger than we are individually  
?? We need to draw together in smaller fellowship to comfort and exhort one another in Christian life and experience
9. Going to invite others to the full of Jesus  
?? God never intended for the church to remain small—the danger to a new church is getting comfortable with itself  
?? Sometimes God will intentionally force His church outward “*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*” Acts 8:1  
?? God’s full plan is to give “*full life*” and, as His Church, our purpose as we are involve in ***His work***

### **Michael Jordan on Team Work**

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. Jordan said, "Everybody wants to sit back and watch. But one [reason] why we became successful in Chicago was<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>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. How many Christians act as spectators of the ministry, when God has called them to be participants?

### **Commitment Means Follow Through**

The kamikaze pilot who flew 50 missions was involved—but never committed.

### **Accomplishing the Impossible**

The University of California at Berkley took on an impossible assignment. It agreed to coordinate an international effort to locate extra-terrestrial life. That is a daunting project. We live in a large galaxy, and the multi-million dollar radio telescopes looking at it suck in a lot of data. In fact, so much data is collected and forwarded to Berkley that no computer on earth is powerful enough to process it all. To accomplish this impossible task Berkley asked home computer users around the world to contact them over the Internet and download a program called "SETI @ Home." The SETI software makes a connection over the Internet to a computer in California and downloads a "work unit"—that is, a set of measurements from a particular part of the sky. The work unit is not large, but it takes the computer a while to crunch the numbers. When the work is done, the computer makes another Internet call to Berkeley, uploads its results, and downloads a new work unit. What today's largest supercomputer could never do alone, over a million ordinary home computers do easily. Sometimes the best way to accomplish the impossible is to harness the help of the ordinary. That is how the church works. God didn't intend any one person to do all the work. No one can do it alone, but if we all do what we can, the unattainable becomes attainable; the church can be all that God intended it to be.

### **1 Cor. 12:20-27**

As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"  
<sup>22</sup>On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup>while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup>so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup>If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.  
[NIV]

### **Acts 2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.  
<sup>43</sup>Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup>All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. [NIV]