

# An Invitation to Serve

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, just going to read the sermon passage before we pass the very preachers. So the sermon passage is Philippians chapter 2, verse 1 to 11.

So Philippians 2. Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in Spirit and of one mind.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

[ 1 : 22 ] Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And that is the way to go. Thank you.

And if you have the energy that you put forth for the Lord's kingdom, the Lord will remember and may the Lord keep you and bless you and your family. Thank you, Enoch. So the Advent season is right now And it is an invitation for us to long for Christmas It's not really about Santa Parade We actually have one in how many of you was there this afternoon Yeah, it was pretty good, isn't it? Yeah, so it's not really about changing presents or dressing up Christmassy It's about Christ Jesus, who is the greatest gift God has given to humanity Jesus gives us meaning about not just this life, but beyond He's not merely a historical figure He's the epitome of humankind And He's still working in our midst So we can be cleansed and flourish in our life So our invitation to series comes to the second part So I know we started the first part last week So Pastor William and I call it, you know, an invitation to serve for today's sermon But it takes teamwork to serve And therefore we have our title Now Have you ever heard of The Art of War by Sun Tzu?

His most famous quote goes Know your enemy and know yourself And you will avoid grave dangers in all battles Sun Wu, the author, wasn't just talking theory As a military strategist in ancient China He proved his wisdom by helping the king of Wu Which is on the, you know, the far right-hand side Defeats an army nearly seven times larger You can see that big fat red kingdom That's his enemy No wonder his books has become a global classic And studied not just by military leaders But business executives too Here is something interesting Have you heard of The Art of Teamwork?

[ 4 : 32 ] Well, you couldn't have, right? Because I made it up But I didn't write it It's the Apostle Paul He did So through the Holy Spirit's inspiration He wrote to the Philippian church What we might call The Art of Teamwork Now, you see, the Philippian church had a problem While they hadn't split apart There was this invisible force Pulling people away from each other In chapter 1, verse 15 Paul points out the first issue It is true that some preach Christ Out of envy and rivalry But others out of goodwill The latter do so out of love Knowing that I am put here For the defense of the gospel The former preach Christ Out of selfish ambition Not sincerely Supposing that they can stir up trouble for me While I am in chain Now, imagine that People doing church work out of jealousy Creating cliques

Comparing ministries Showing off Look how poorly they are doing it But for us, we are brilliant Then, in chapter 4 We see another type of conflict I plead with you, O dear And I plead with Synechi To be of the same mind in the Lord Yes, and I ask you My true companion Help these women Since they have contended At my side At the course of the gospel And look, we have Two key ministry leaders Not speaking to each other Walking past each other Like strangers Sound familiar? How can a church be united When their leaders Can't even look at each other? This is why Paul's message About unity Is so critical For the Philippians church And also for us today Now, when building a strong Serving team This passage gives us Three key things To consider First What should we do?

And second What shouldn't we do? And third What does a true team mindset look like? So Let's jump in So if we have to sum up The very first point In one word I would use the word Closeness So In Cantonese We have this particular word Called Which means Familiar and well connected Building a team Starts with relationships The passage shows us how Encourage each other Comfort one another Build close bonds Every word Every action Wrapped in compassion And kindness And here is the beautiful part These qualities Don't come from Our own efforts It flow From God himself And look at the source Encouragement In Christ Comfort From his love Being close together

Through the spirit God's fingerprints Are all over this passage You can see We have Christ We have spirit We have love And remember God is love But notice What's missing here No specific mention Of rebuke in Christ Or accusations Through the spirit You don't start A relationship By pointing out flaws Team building Starts with God's love Expressed through Encouragement Comfort And kindness And surely There is a time For correction And rebuke God's word Sometimes Needs To challenge us But let's be honest Those occasions Are relatively Comparatively rare Most people simply Need encouragement And comfort Don't they Now let's dive deeper Into these elements Encouragement Encouragement In Christ

[ 8 : 47 ] So when did you last Encourage someone And you know what happens When we give Encouragement To other people You know like Oh you're doing A great job Right But Now Once you added The word but That's not really Encouragement Isn't it It's criticism In disguise The moment we add That but Right We are We're turning Our praise Into a Trojan horse For criticism Encouragement Needs to be genuine We say it Out of love And sometimes Helpful criticisms Can be healthy too Right Because You are seeking The benefits For the other person Out of love But cynical ones Are usually Self-serving And it's best To avoid True encouragement Flows from Valuing others About ourselves As verse 3 Teachers Now have you Spotted gifts In others

In others That you Don't possess When we're stuck Thinking we're the best At everything We miss the chance To genuinely Appreciate others Now if you Have ever been to A teaching position You know this First hand Yes Discipline Has its place But it's Encouragement That makes Students bloom And think of Encouragement As like your Engine oil Of your car It keeps the whole Team running Smoothly Second point Comfort From His love Not yet We don't just Comfort people Randomly Right But life Is a roller Coaster And everyone Can hit Low points And if you Ever notice Someone Flagging In their Spirit What do You do You Reach out To them How do We comfort Others Right

God usually Uses Our weaknesses Hey I'm sorry To hear that What you're Going through I kind of Know how You feel I've gone Through similar Situations You know Last time I was like This Or that And you See The ability To comfort Other people Comes from Eating humble Pies Ourselves And experiencing God's grace And love In messy Situations And you can Rarely comfort People coming From a higher Moral ground His love Jesus' love Is humble And tender So let's Move on To the next Phrase If Any Common Sharing In the Spirit The original Word here Is Kononia Which means Fellowship In the Spirit It speaks Of deep Relationships Now even Secular Workplaces Invest In team Building To forge Connections

And shouldn't Our church Fellowship Run deeper Than that And after All we Share Prayer We share Scripture And God's Presence Together Right Now if You have Never tried A church Fellowship Or Sell group Give it A go And if You are Already Part of It Brilliant Let's Nurture This Spirit Given Gift Of Fellowship Now here Is something You might Have noticed In a Large Group People can Feel Intimidated You know For sharing Personal matters But in Smaller Groups Once Trust Is built People People Can Open Up Naturally Remember Trust Takes Time You can't Expect Instant Deep Connections After one Or two Meetings It's like Tending a Garden You need To show

Up Regularly Nurturing Those Relationships Until It Blossoms Into Genuine Heart To Heart Connections Now next

We have Tenderness And Compassion In the Verse So what Does True Compassion Look Like So let Me Share A story About Winnie The Pool Now Picture This So Winnie The Pool Strolling By The River One Day And He Spots Poor Eeyore Floating Downstream Clearly Struggling To Stay Afloat He Was Like Hey Buddy Are You Out For Swim And Eeyore Was Like Yeah I'm Just Having A Little Float But His Eyes Were Really Pleading For Help Am I Looking Miserable Here So Winnie The Pool Yawns Oh Well Be More Careful Next Time Oh That's Very Kind Of You You You Know Stuttering Politely Hmm You Seem To Be Sinking There And Yeo Was Like Would

[13:50] You Mind Helping Me Out And Finally Winnie The Pool Pulled Him From The River Yeo Was Like Oh I'm Sorry To Trouble You And Winnie The Pool Was Oh Just Speak Up Earlier Next Time Now Is This The Kind Of Compassion We Are Called To Show Aren't We Sometimes Just Like This Version Of We Need The Pool We See Someone Struggling Yet We Are Slow To Help And Even When We Do Help We Can't Resist That Little Lecture That's Not True Compassion Is It As Christians Can We Do Better Than This So Let's Wrap Up Our First Big Point About Teamwork Closeness How Let's Encourage Comfort And Truly Care For One Another And Let's Show Real Compassion Through Action The Second Key Principle

Here Is Unity So Let's See What The Scripture Says Then Make My Joy Complete By Being Like Minded Having The Same Love Being One In Spirit And Of One Mind Paul's Greatest Joy Is Seeing The Church United In Purpose And Priority Now How Many Of You Remember Last Year's Car Wash How Many Of You Were There Many Right So Now Everyone Just Jumps In In Both From All The Congregations So We Not Only Wash Our Cars Serving Coffee And Talking With People From The Community Right And The Best Part Without Anyone Asking We Started Washing Each Other's Cars As Well Right That's Unity In Action But Unity Isn't

So Simple Right Let's Talk About What I Call The Low Level Unity And You Know Everyone Just Not Along No Question Ask Right Looks Perfect On The Service Think Of Dictatorship One Person Calls All The Shots And Who Dare To Speak Up And Everyone Smiles And Agrees Right And If You Ever Have A Different View Well You May Find Yourself Behind Bars And You Know With Some Made Up Charges Sorry About My Mic Okay Yep Now The Famous Saying Is Right Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely And That's Why We Do Things Differently In Baptist Churches We Build Consensus Through Discussion And Voting Yes It Takes A Bit Longer But It's This Very Purpose That Keeps Us From Power Corruption Now

There Is Another Type Of Low Level Unity Called Group Think It It's It's It's It's It's It's It's Important Perspectives Get Buried Because Nobody Wants To Be Seen As The Troublemaker But Here Here's The Thing High Level Unity Is What Scripture Points Us To It's About Sharing The Same Love While Being Okay With Different Viewpoints Knowing They Often Serve God's Greater Purpose So The Other Day When I Was Preparing This Message I Was Making An Ice Milk Tea In Our Church Kitchen So I Mixed Hot Water With Milk Powder And Then Add Ice And Then Suddenly It Hits Me Right Boiling Water And Ice Are Complete Opposites And

Yet Together They Create Something Wonderful The Perfect Ice Milk Tea Now Church Discussions Can Be Like That Two Seemingly Opposing Views Like Hot Water And Ice Can Blend And Create Something That Propels Forward Now Let's Talk About The Third Part Solidarity It's Like Being The Same Boat Together When We Are Sailing Or Going On Adventure We Look Out For Each Other Right So The Scripture Puts It This Way Each Of You Should Look Not Only To Your Own Interests But Also To The Interests Of Others That■

[19:10] Basically, do life with each other through fellowship, encourage, comfort each other with tenderness and compassion. Second, unity.

Getting along without power play or groupthink. And sometimes working on the same projects can help. Third, solidarity. Looking out for each other proactively.

Now let's turn to the don'ts. Let's go back to verse three. So do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Rather, in humility values, failure others above yourselves. Paul warns against two things, selfish ambition and vain conceit. The church isn't a ladder for climbing social status or gaining glory.

If you are here to boost your image, don't bother. Those who know scripture will see it right through. So the same warning appears in Galatians chapter five.

[ 20 : 17 ] The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy.

And I warn you as I did before. And I warn you as I did before. That those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Notice how selfish ambition is right next to dissensions and factions.

As if they are the natural consequences of selfish ambition. Now, this is a clear warning.

Don't manipulate others or create cliques to elevate yourself. When personal ambition meets faction building, it becomes toxic for the church ministry.

I'm giving this up. Leo, could you mute this? I'm going to use the mic. All right.

[ 21 : 25 ] So let's continue. Now, the warning is serious, even for selfish ambition, because it says, those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, back to Philippians 2, 3. Rather, in humility, value others above yourself. Selfish ambition and spiritual snobbery can be very subtle.

I think this little poem exposes them really well. Check this out. Now, believe as I believe. No more, no less. That I am right and no one else confess.

Feel as I feel. Think as I think. Eat as I eat. And drink as I drink. Look as I look. Do as I do. Then I'll have fellowship with you. But how do we avoid selfish ambition or spiritual snobbery?

Or pride. Or pride. And that's why we need not just the art of teamwork, but the heart of teamwork. Because without the right heart, these do's and don'ts won't work.

[ 22 : 37 ] So let's dive into verses 5 and 11. In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who being in very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of his servants, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross.

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Let's look at these powerful verses. You can almost see Paul overwhelmed by Christ's selflessness.

He was bursting into praise. Paul gives the heart of teamwork in verse 5. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

[ 23 : 54 ] Personally, I think the Chinese Bible renders beautifully. So the Chinese Bible goes like this. Let the heart of Christ Jesus be your heart.

So what exactly is Christ's mindset? What's his heart like? Look at verse 6. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

When we work together as a team, the first key is letting go. Jesus, who holds more power than the entire universe, chose to let go of his privileges as the creator.

Think about that. What privileges are we holding on to? Maybe we have served in church for years. We have gained respect, earned some influence.

But we started a little bit entitled. When we do that, we will start to dodge the tedious tasks sometimes, right?

[ 25 : 04 ] Like taking meeting notes. Now, verse 7 tells us, rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of his servants, being made in human likeness.

So, the second key to imitate Jesus is empathy. Taking the nature of a servant.

Now, of course, we don't have slaves or even living helpers in New Zealand, right? So what does that mean for us? It's about perspective taking.

Putting ourselves into other people's shoes. So, think about it. If you are a boss, do you see things through your employees' eyes? If you are a teacher, can you imagine your students' struggles?

As parents, do you understand your children's viewpoints? In church leadership, do we grasp the congregation's needs? As church members, do we understand the challenges of those serving for you?

[ 26 : 11 ] Or do we act like customers, expecting perfect service? Now, look at the next verse. He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of his servants, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death. Even death on a cross. When we served together as a team, here is the third crucial thing about imitating Jesus.

It's humility and obedience, just like Jesus did. Jesus didn't just step down from being God to become human. He knew his mission would end up terribly at the cross. He chose to let his enemies mock him, torture him, and kill him in the most brutal way possible. He knew exactly what was coming.

So, in the garden of Gethsemane, right before his arrest, he said this in Matthew 26, 38. Can you imagine that level of anguish?

[ 27 : 37 ] Even before the physical pain began, Jesus was suffering immense emotional pain. In Cantonese, we have a saying, It's like, I'd rather die than do something.

So, here is the question. If we are trying to think like Christ, what are we willing to endure for God's kingdom? What makes you feel like you'd rather die than doing something when you serve?

Maybe it's certain tasks, like I have mentioned, like taking minutes? Or perhaps, you know, working with some particular people? Would that be the struggle?

Now, let's be honest. If we can't handle minor inconveniences, if we can't serve with difficult people, what right do we have calling ourselves Christ's disciples?

Having Christ's mindset means being willing to take on even the things that make us feel we would rather die. However, for the kingdom's sake, we need to be willing to do them, don't we?

[ 28 : 46 ] So, let's wrap up by looking at the arts of teamwork, which are the do's and don'ts, and the heart of teamwork, which are the attitudes.

Now, think about church meetings, right? That's where we spend most of our time in, right? So, let's use them as our application example. Closeness.

In our meetings, what's the choice or flavor of our words? Are we quick to criticize or do we build each other up? And remember, true fellowship happens both in and outside those meetings.

That's where being like-minded starts. Second, unity. Unity isn't about everything nodding along blindly.

It's about listening well to different views until we find genuine agreement. Solidarity. Are we truly looking out for each other's interests?

[ 29 : 49 ] When decisions are made, do we pitch in to help? Or do we just leave for one or two people to shoulder all the work? And there's one thing to get rid of.

Selfish ambition. Sometimes we see people arguing just to save face. And today, today's scripture calls us to do something better.

And finally, think about the three attitudes. Letting go. Think about church meetings. Are we holding on to our preferences too tightly?

Or sometimes do we need to loosen up our grip and make room for others' ideas? Empathy. Now picture this. It is already late in our meeting.

You know, some need to start preparing for the next ministry. Others have got family commitments.

So being considerate means being concise and efficient. Can we first, you know, fast track the simple stuff and save the deeper discussions when we have proper time?

[ 31 : 00 ] Third, humility and obedience. So let's zoom out to our personal life now. What is the one task you know that you have been called to do but have been avoiding?

Following Jesus means embracing the task no matter how hard it is. The reward is waiting for you on the other side. Let's pray together, shall we?

Dear Lord Jesus, before you go on to the cross, you prayed. I have given them the glory that you have gave me.

And they may be one as we are one. So, Heavenly Father, make us truly one. One team. One big team as PCBC. May you guide our serving teams to follow your hearts.

And let your spirits fill every meeting, every ministry, and every moment of our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Accessibility Shortcuts.

[ 32 : 07 ] Amen. Accessibility Shortcuts. Accessibility shortcuts Use the tab key to navigate