

LOVE LAKE WYLIE
Week Two: Every Member a Minister

Good morning Lake Wylie. If you have your Bible go ahead and begin opening to 1 Corinthians 12:12 If you're using one of the Bibles in the pew rack our text is on page: 959.

This is week two of our series Love Lake Wylie. We're taking seriously— the teaching of the Bible— that we cannot become who God has called us to be without the church. We're countering the individualism of our culture and declaring something bold: **we need one another. We need our church. And we need to not just be served by the church— in order for us to become who we were made to be, we must be serving others.**

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

I want to make a quick note here— what this tells us is that though we all have our differences, **the gospel transcends what makes us different— but it's important you and I understand something— though the gospel transcends our different it does not negate our differences.**

We are not trying to shed what makes us different— we are trying to embrace what makes us different. The gospel does not diminish our differences— **it allows us to unify though we are different.**

I do not want to pastor a church where everyone has the same talents, the same hobbies, where everyone is the same color and shares in the same culture. That wouldn't reflect the Kingdom of God, that would reflect our own prejudices and preferences.

Alfred and I talk about this regularly— the gospel allows me and him as a white man and a black man to experience great unity—

but the gospel, and our fellowship as brothers should never diminish either my whiteness, or his blackness. This goes for any race, this goes for different age groups. This goes for different social/economic groups. This goes for different talents, abilities, hobbies.

Our shared faith in the shed blood and resurrection of Jesus Christ transcends Jew and Greek, Black, White, Latino, low class, upper class, young and old, rednecks and tree huggers. But it does not diminish or denigrate any of these over the rest.

Our goal here is to be a church that grows in this direction— that we are a multifaceted diamond all unified around the gospel allowing all tribes, tongues and nations to demonstrate their strengths, and admit their own weaknesses. **Remember that the true head of this church is an Aramaic speaking middle easterner named Jesus.**

The church should be a patchwork quilt— different patterns and material— all knit together in the wonderful grace of Jesus Christ, all following and holding fast to the Word of God, all cooperatively reaching into our world to snatch people from eternity without Christ.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body.

Here in chapter 12 Paul is addressing spiritual gifts— abilities and passions that every member of the church is given by the Spirit. There was some tension in the church because some members were arguing that their gifts and ministries within the church were more important and should get more airtime than the rest.

Paul is pushing back reminding them that every person matters.

Every single person is gifted with different

Spiritual gifts: some are preachers, some teachers, some are administrators, some are worship leaders, some are strong in their prayer life.

Heart: some of you are super passionate about caring for the sick, others of you really have a passion to reach the lost, a few of you really want to minister to the homeless or orphans or widows. Some of you are in business God has given you a passion for the marketplace.

Abilities: there are musicians, singers, painters, hand-made card makers, cooks, photographers.

Personalities: every church is filled extraverts— y'all love being around people. You're the people who want to be a part of the front door ministry of the church. And every church is filled with introverts— and the thought of being on the front door team horrifies you— but you'd love to be some one who helped organize and put together the weekly crafts for our kids ministry.

Experience: Let me tell you something— God never wastes a hurt in your life. You may have wondered why God allowed you to go through something tragic. And I can't give you a total answer to that question but I can tell you that at the very least God allowed you to go through it so that you can speak on a sympathetic level to others in our church who are going through the same thing. In the coming year I want you to come to me and consider sharing your personal story with our church. You never know how God can use your experiences to reach someone else way better than any sermon I can preach.

Maybe it was cancer, or a miscarriage, or a divorce, or a kid who went off the deep end, or maybe you lost a job. One of my favorite Psalms says:

*Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
As they go through the Valley of Weeping
they make it a place of springs;*

That verse tells us that when you place your eyes on the grace of Jesus— you can turn your tears into a well for someone else to draw from.

Listen to me, some of you have never considered that God can, and wants to use you in his plan to redeem this world.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

Can you imagine everyone here wanting to be the preacher? Worse yet, can you imagine everyone here wanting to lead the music? Now I love all of y'all, but I stand at the front of the room and some of you can't carry a tune in a bucket.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Every single person at Lake Wylie matters.

Those who preach and lead worship, or read scripture from this stage can never say to those who are deacons, or small group leaders or children's ministry leaders that we have no need of them.

Those who love evangelism in this church can never say, "We don't need fellowship." Those who love discipleship should never say, "We don't want to engage in missions."

Do you realize that most people who visit a church have made up their mind whether or not they'll return before the service ever starts?

I want you to realize that the sermon starts in the parking lot.

- Are they're parking spots near the front door for guests? (I park out on the grass)
- Did someone open the door for them with a smile and welcome them to our campus?
- We're the restrooms clean?
- Was there a smiling adult who helped them check in their child?
- Were the ushers friendly and helpful?
- Did the members of the church show genuine interest?
 - When you introduce yourself to a visitor in our church don't just give them your name and say "Glad you're here" and move on—on the other hand—you probably don't want to start telling them about that skin tag you had cut off your back last week in your first conversation either.
 - I'll usually say something like, "Tell me about you."
 - Once you've had a few weeks to get to know someone invite them out to lunch after the service.

All of these things happen before the first song is sung or the sermon is preached. The sermon starts in the parking lot. And you are all a part of that.

Every member has different gifts and all are needed to balance the body. And— **every member should be a minister.**

Charles Spurgeon gave a list of what it takes for a church member to be a minister:

1. **Tender Heart-** If you took a spiritual gifts test you'd rank high in mercy. You'd be the person who always wants give a second chance. Some of us don't rank too high in mercy. Were the ones who say, "The horse is lame, go get the shotgun."
2. **Quick Eyes and Ears-** Charles Spurgeon said some people hear a splash, and they go to the rescue. Ask God to give you a sensitivity to the needs of others. To have quick eyes and ears, to be on the lookout for people in our church and in your neighborhood who need help.
3. **Rapid Feet-** Once you see a need, you don't sit around and wait for someone else to meet it. You jump in!
4. **A Loving Face-** Too many Christians walk around looking like they just drank a bottle of cough syrup.
5. **Firm Foot-** You need to be a strong person, and have a firm footing yourself. I've heard news stories of someone who fell into a pool and even though they don't know how to swim people will jump in and end up drowning themselves and the person who they were trying to help. Some of you today at this moment aren't in a position to minister to and serve others— you need to be ministered to. So many people come to a church and get plugged into service, and they treat the church like a job— the church isn't a job, it's a family. If that's you today, pay attention in a moment because I want to tell you how our church wants to help you and serve you.
6. **Bending Back-** You can't help people out if you aren't willing to bend low to where they are. Some of us today need to pray and ask God to remove the idol of convenience in our lives. We live in a world where we can all take care of ourselves. We don't need to see Jim about grinding our

grain. We don't need to see Sharon about mending our clothes. We go into target and buy everything we need. The world wasn't always like that. People once needed one another— and in order for you to live out God's plan for your life you're going to need to pray for God to move you outside your zone of convenience and comfort into someone else's mess. But, thankfully, when you do God is going to show you that you were designed for that! The simple act of caring for someone else's needs is going to make you forget your own anxieties.

7. Gospel Motivation- What will turn you onto serving one another is the memory that at one time you were lost and hopeless in your sins. You were without God and hope in the world— but God, being rich in love and mercy, and wild extravagant grace had a tender heart to you! He had quick eyes and ears— he heard your cry of desperation— from out of the pit he heard you. And he didn't wait— he sprang into action on your behalf—with a loving face and firm feet— listen he didn't just reach down into the pit and pull you out— God himself, in Christ Jesus, jumped down into your pit and got underneath you and lifted you out and he was placed in your pit of sin and sorrow. He bent infinitely low for you.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

Now, that's the text— the church is put together with people who all have different gifts and abilities— and every member of the church should be seeking to use their own gifts and abilities to minister to one another. And here's what I want to do for the rest of the sermon. I want you to get a picture of how it is you can

begin serving and ministering in the church. There are a variety of ways and I just want to point you in some directions:

Sunday Morning

Front Door Ministry

Ushers

Lake Wylie Kids

Teachers

Crafty people

Check-In

We sing as a congregation—I want you to sing out. Lift your voice. Have you really considered all that God has done for you. Have you ever considered that your singing is a testimony of your faith to all who come to our services?

Small Groups

The way that the majority of our church will serve one another and our city is through small groups.

2 on Sunday morning. One on Wednesday night.
"Communities on Mission"

COMMUNITIES:

People need:

- Friendships
- Encouragement
- Care and Concern
- Counsel
- Accountability

When we say that small groups are communities, we're affirming that in opposition to the highly individualized world we live in, our church is committing to deeper, flourishing friendships that provide encouragement, care, counsel and accountability. Small groups are the primary place where we care for the body of the church. We don't leave it up to a single pastor or deacon. We take

responsibility for our family. We're committing to making sure that "church" isn't just a Sunday morning spectator sport, but a participatory team, or family.

If you've been wondering— how can I plug into the life of Lake Wylie Baptist outside of just attending— join a small group. Meet with other people in our church. Study God's Word together. Build some friendships, and care for one another. Be a part of a community within our larger church.

ON MISSION:

Jesus demands that his church:

- Love our neighbors
- Minister to the needs of our city
- Engage culture
- Evangelize and disciple the lost

When we say that small groups are communities *on mission* we're affirming our commitment to work together for the advancement of God's gospel in Christ! Small groups are the primary place where we train one another as disciples on a mission. We're not coming to small group primarily to fill our heads with knowledge, but to help one another "get on mission" at home, at work, in our city, and in the world. Rooted in the gospel, we help one another grow up into Christ in character, generosity, building gospel friendships, praying and reading God's Word, and evangelism and missions.

The danger in every church is that "missions" becomes synonymous with sharing your faith or going on a trip to a different country. We want to make sure that "missions" isn't viewed as something only the elite Christians do. Mission is for everyone.

Did you hear me there? Mission is for everyone. And that's because mission is the totality of the life we are called to live in Christ in this world.

That's why we're making it a part of our small group philosophy. Every small group is going to gear itself towards living a life on mission in our city, and in the world.

What does it look like to live on mission as an individual and as a small group?

Individual:

- Be a part of the community/neighborhood you live in.
- Invite your neighbors over for dinner.
- Go to the neighborhood block parties and cook outs.
- Host a Bible study in your home and invite neighbors to it.
- Frequent the same gas station, restaurants, and grocery stores— get to know the people there by name and become friendly. God will give you opportunities to minister.
- Be a person who is praying for God to make those moments obvious to you.

Small Group:

- For some groups this might look like visiting a nursing home and leading a worship service for those who can't come to church.
- For others it might mean ministering to inmates at a local prison.
- It might mean your group works together to purchase and pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.
- What if next Halloween your small group chose a neighborhood that one of your members lived in and threw a block-party in your neighborhood and hand out invites to Lake Wylie Kids along with your candy.
- I want your group to be very entrepreneurial about how you serve. But be intentional about not just being a community of friends— but also on mission for Jesus!

For some of you—this means you really need to join a small group. If all you ever do is attend a Sunday morning service, but never take that next step you can't experience the kind of

relationships and care that you need. Our Sunday morning crowd is simply too big to bring you friendships and care.

So you need to take that card and write “Small Groups” on the back.

Living on mission can take a million shapes, and no two people, no two small groups will do it the same way—but all will be focused on having an outward face to our community!

Illustration: Dad’s lawn mower.