

The Final Word on Relationships

Titus 3:9-15

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Shepherd's Community Church

False Teachers (9-11)

(Matthew 22:36-39; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Acts 15:5, 11;)

Factious People (12-13)

(1 Timothy 4:7; 5:11; Galatians 5:20; John 13:35; Ephesians 4:3; Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17-18)

Faithful Servants (14-15)

(1 Corinthians 13:6; Revelation 3:19; Acts 20:4; 18:24-28; Ephesians 6:21; 4:16; Colossians 4:7; Galatians 5:13)

Volunteerism... or Responsibility?

The Word of God never speaks of volunteers. It speaks of those who freely serve and who recognize they have a joyful *obligation to serve others* in whatever manner they are capable (or gifted). In the New Testament the four basic passages dealing with the believers' use of their gifts are Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. In these passages we learn that Christ has sovereignly distributed His gifts to His Church through her various members and that they are responsible to use these gifts (interests, talents, training, resources, opportunities) to faithfully serve others.□□

Nowhere in Scripture do we have the slightest hint that God's people are to volunteer. Rather, the Scriptures indicate that the use of our gifts should be considered a joyful *responsibility*. It is for that reason that I do not like the term *volunteer* when thinking of God's people serving the body of Christ. The term volunteer may give a believer the idea that he has an option whether or not he is willing to serve in a certain capacity.□□ **Instead, God's Word tells me clearly that if I have been** gifted in a certain area, I have no alternative but to use that gift, serving with the strength God gives me, for the good of others. Such service should be performed joyfully, thanking God for giving me the opportunity to serve His body.□□

Our responsibility is to learn what our gifts are and to use them to the fullest. Our gifts do not have to be perfected in order to serve. That is a mistake made or excuse used by many, which keeps them from serving. Opportunity and need will help determine when our gifts should be exercised. Our abilities to serve in a certain area will surely increase with experience as we exercise our gifts. If we wait until we think we are fully qualified, we may never use that with which God has gifted us.□□ **There** are, obviously, believers who are trying to serve in areas in which they are not gifted, or not sufficiently trained or qualified. This is where we need the honest counsel of the church leadership and membership. Thankfully, God has not gifted us all in the same way. Yet, he has placed on all of us the responsibility to serve in the areas for which we are most capable, not as volunteers, but as His children, joyfully accepting the responsibility to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- *Are you presently serving in some capacity in the church? Have you considered that as volunteer service, or as a privilege and responsibility before God?*
- *Have you looked on the church with a "consumer mentality," thinking, "what's in it for me," rather than, "in what ways can I give my life in service to others?"*
- *Are there areas of need that you could and should fill?*

