

# Congregational Church of the Messiah

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## Are You on God's Team?

Micah 6:6-8

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One of the marvelous parts of being on God's team is knowing the entire success or failure does not depend on any one person. Each person does make a significant difference, so when one of us is dishonored, we all are affected, and when one of us is honored, we can all be proud.

We are surrounded by major sports—baseball's World Series, college and pro football *ad infinitum* on weekends, and pro basketball on Sundays as well as throughout the week. For each of these teams, there are extensive try-outs, and only those players who pass the tests qualify to be on the team.

According to prophet Micah in the Old Testament, the test to be on God's team required three things: "to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8) That scripture means doing what we know God wants us to do: to be kind and gentle with other people, as well as ourselves, and not to be arrogant or too proud but to walk humbly giving credit to others and to God.

The difficulty is being able to always respond purely and consistently in the right way no matter what is in front of us or which way the stock market is going. We have a very difficult time expressing God's spirit of love on our own. We need His help.

Enter a new coach into the world, one who understands us and the world, and who shows us how to live in this world in right relationship with God all the time and who wants to teach us how to live that way too.

When we follow the coaching of Jesus Christ, we find ourselves discovering new skills and abilities we did not realize we had. A good coach or teacher will often bring out more in a student than the person realizes is there. The player often has little idea how really well he or she can develop the innate ability that God has already placed within him or her. The good coach helps the person become aware of latent talents and develops them.

Because coaches help develop ability and promote cooperation among players, they are a critical part of every team. They train talented individual players to become a team of winners.

Players also learn to follow the directions of the coach. If every player does his or her own thing and plays individually with little sharing with the other members, the whole team suffers. When each player is looking out for himself or herself, there is little

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interaction The coach is the one who draws teammates together and instructs them how to play on the same team with sharing instead of grandstanding.

Two seasons ago, the Lakers had that problem. There were too many super stars and not enough cooperation of helping each other to be effective for the good of the whole team. That year the team did not even make the finals. Other teams also have similar experiences when one or two super-stars think they do not need the rest of the team and do not follow the coach's directions. Last season, the Lakers played like a team and advanced to the playoffs.

We are all on God's team here at Messiah. Jesus Christ came that we might be saved and not have to deal with life without His help. God seeks to guide and direct us so we will live full lives and be a blessing.

This past week, and especially Friday and Saturday, members and friends of Messiah had the opportunity to reach out to the entire community through our GIANT YARD SALE. Over 25 members and friends of Messiah worked long hours by bringing items, arranging them, and then engaging neighbors and community members who came yesterday to buy the things.

We are members one of another on this Messiah team. Our team work was evident yesterday as we greeted, welcomed, and sought to make others at home as they wandered in and browsed through the hundreds and hundreds of items that were on display to be sold.

No one person is the whole team. Because of the efforts of many persons, we were able to hold a successful GIANT YARD SALE. Many individuals worked very hard to be sure everything would work out well. Their efforts are commendable and appreciated. They made it possible for others to come, add their energy for a time, and then return to their homes having helped at key times when it was needed most.

When we come before God then, we do so first as an individual, and then we become part of God's team here and through our entire Messiah fellowship.

How well we do depends on how well we each follow the coach, Jesus Christ. He reminded us of two great commandments, which instruct us on the primary relationships that should guide our lives:

- To love God with all our hearts and minds and souls and strength and
- To love our neighbor as our self.

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Yesterday Team Messiah had a magnificent day in which to show how much we seek to put our belief in these two great commandments into action. We had opportunities to show how much we respected one another and how much we valued each of the other persons who came to the SALE.

We had an opportunity to reach out with God's love to children, youth, and adults who came onto the grass or into the fireside room to sort through clothes looking for the perfect item for themselves or for a friend.

How well we did will be reflected in the coming days as stories from the day are passed around the community.

Good training includes evaluation and looking at replays to see how to improve and making those improvements. Without improving, we are stuck with just what we have today and nothing else. God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.

As Christians, we always can grow in our understanding of how God wants us to express His love to others. We can keep our minds open to learning more about how Jesus Christ coached those first twelve disciples in what it meant to follow Him. He did it in the most effective way: telling, showing, and then giving the chance to act under His watchful guidance.

Every day, whether we are aware of God's vigilant presence or not, we strive to follow Jesus' life and teachings. Each of us lives hopefully aware of the guidance of God in our lives.

Then when we have time to reflect in it, we may see God's hand shaping our choice or giving us a little more charity in the way we speak to someone else, the cheerful greeting we give our neighbor, reminding us of key things that we can do to help him or her on a particular day or evening.

Each member has a vital part to play if the entire Church is to reflect God's love to others. With God's constant guidance, we will each be part of Messiah's team of winners.

Amen.