**Reflecting God by Serving Others**

**Romans 12:1-8**

Tawna Robinson

Sandy Ridge Church — March 15, 2015

(36 min. + Bill’s 3-5 min.) **(Slide 1)**

**Romans 12:1-2** (Have someone else read this)

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.
Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

(Prayer)

We have entered into a new era for Sandy Ridge Community Church. We have hired a new pastor who will soon be among us along with his wife and three young boys.

Derek and Leah will fill a unique and very necessary role for us. They will certainly be a blessing to the body as a whole as well as to each of us individually.

 **(Slide 2)**

The **By-Laws of Sandy Ridge** defines the role of the Pastor this way:

(Article VII-B)

1. The Lead Pastor will serve as the spiritual leader of the church with primary responsibilities to pray, teach the Word, cast vision, and to oversee the public worship services and the administration of the ordinances. He will care for the membership and the spiritual interests of the church, warning against error and guarding against false teaching.

2. He will have primary responsibility for seeking God’s will for the strategic mission and vision of the church. He will enlist the Leadership Team, staff and other church leadership in strategic thinking and in the casting of the church’s vision.

3. He will be a member and chairperson of the Leadership Team.

 (**Slide 3)**

**Pastor’s Duties**

As the spiritual leader of our church, Pastor Derek will be responsible to:

\* Pray for us

\* Teach the Word to us

\* Cast vision of what God is doing and wants to do through us

\* Oversee our public worship services

\* Administer ordinances such as baptisms, communions, weddings, funerals

\* Warn against error and guard us from false teaching

\* Seek God’s will for the strategic mission and vision of our church

\* Lead the leaders of our church 1

These duties are absolutely vital to our growth and success as a local body of Jesus Christ. Without proper vision, leading and oversight, we could either be very busy doing things outside the will of God, or could languish in empty religiosity that is without power and void of life.

I believe we have chosen exactly the right person to carry out the pastoral duties outlined in the by-laws. Derek seems to be a visionary man, one who prays to God and trusts God’s leading, and who has a good grasp on the teachings of Scripture.

However, we as the body of Christ at Sandy Ridge must never believe that a pastor alone is responsible or even capable of keeping us growing, becoming more effective and healthy. We too have immense responsibilities as believers in Christ and as partners and participants in this church.

The book of **Romans, chapters 12-16**, addresses the vital service that every person who calls himself a believer in Christ is not only called to do, but is also empowered to do through God’s Holy Spirit living within them.

 **(Slide 4)**

**SALVATION**

**Beginning Justification/Redemption Freed from the penalty of sin**

**Process Sanctification Freed from the power of sin**

**Future Glorification Freed from the presence of sin**

As Derek said in his sermon when they visited the first of January, salvation is not just a one-time event, but is instead a continuum of becoming more and more like the One we serve. It begins with laying down our life and our sins at the foot of the cross. When we do this, we receive God’s mercy and forgiveness, are justified or redeemed, and are freed from the penalty of sin (which is spiritual death and separation from God).

After this, we enter into the process of sanctification, the next step in the salvation continuum. We are filled with the Holy Spirit, are given God’s eternal life, and are freed from the power of sin. We now have the power to serve God and to live a life that reflects and glorifies Him. As Jesse taught a few weeks ago, the more we look to Him for our power and our unique purposes, the more He will direct our worship of Him as seen through acts of service, and the clearer our reflection of Him will be to the world. Sin, which could be defined as walking away from the Lord and going our own way, darkens the mirror of our life. But sanctification, which is accomplished through spending time with our Lord and obeying His directives, brightens and focuses our reflection. The middle part of the salvation process continues through the rest of our earthly lives.

 2

When Christ returns and calls us to Himself, we will enter into the last stage which is called glorification. Here we will be caught up to be with Jesus, receive a new body in His kingdom, and will forever know freedom from the presence of sin.

I want to focus today on the middle stage of our salvation experience, the state of sanctification, where we are learning to live, to love, and to serve as Christ’s representatives here on earth.

How do we begin this process? You need to . . .

 **(Slide 5)**

**1. Commit Your Body to God’s Service**

**Romans 12:1**

**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.**

What are we to do?

Offer our bodies as living sacrifices!

offer = aorist tense, infinitive voice, active mood

You are called to offer your living body, to lay it on the altar before God, and to leave it there!

He is not asking for your tithe, or one day out of the week, or for church membership. He is asking for your whole life! He does not want a dead body, but a living breathing active human being who is willing to serve Him the rest of his or her life.

Why would we do this?

God’s mercy has been lavished on us. He came and died on the cross to pay for your sins so that you could be reconciled to Him, so you can walk and talk with Him even as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden.

 Do you want to be holy and to please God?

This is the only way to accomplish it.

 This is the only spiritual act of worship He asks of you.

When David was confronted with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, his prayer of repentance in Psalm 51 expresses the kind of worship that God is pleased with. David is speaking to God:

**Psalm 51:16-17
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

David had received God’s mercy and forgiveness, the same that is available to all of us. And in return, David offered God his humble and grateful spirit, his heart and his life.

In the same way, we are called to offer our bodies, our lives, as living sacrifices to the God who loves and forgives us. This is our spiritual act of worship.

What is the next step? You need to . . .

 **(Slide 6)**

**2. Make Up Your Mind to Serve God**

**Romans 12:2**

**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

What are we to do?

 Stop conforming to the pattern of this world!

 This is a present tense, active voice, imperative mood.

This is a command, not a suggestion. It requires us to make an active decision to stop conforming to the world around us. This is a decision we will need to make continually throughout our lives.

 Renew your minds and be transformed!

Again, this is a present tense, active voice, imperative mood.

You must continually decide to do it; it is not optional.

How can our minds be renewed and our lives transformed?

By actively and continually turning away from the ways of the world and actively and continually allowing God’s Word and God’s Spirit to transform our thoughts and our actions into those that reflect His goodness, His perfection and His will.

Now that we have committed our bodies to God’s service and have made up our minds to serve God, and are being transformed, what will this service look like?

You need to . . . **(Slide 7)**

**3. See Yourself as One Among the Many**

**Romans 12:3-5**

**For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.**

 4

What are we **not** to do?

We are not to think too highly of ourselves, for we are only one among all the members of our church.

What **are** we to do?

\* We are to see ourselves realistically, with “sober judgment,” understanding who we are in relationship to all the others in our church and in the body of Christ as a whole.

\* We are to value and respect the other members of the body for the unique gifts, talents and strengths they provide to the proper working of the church.

\* We are to constantly keep in mind that just as our physical body functions well as a result of all the individual parts working together, so our church is only strong when each member remembers and works with a sense of oneness and belonging with all the others.

\* In our unified purpose comes strength and success.

Next, you need to . . . **(Slide 8)**

**4. Use Your Gifts to Serve God and One Another**

**Romans 12:6-8**

**We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.**

**If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.
If it is serving, let him serve;**

**if it is teaching, let him teach;
if it is encouraging, let him encourage;**

**if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously;**

**if it is leadership, let him govern diligently;**

**if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.**

What is true of our gifts?

 \* We all have different gifts.

\* We don’t choose them; they are given to us by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit.

**1 Cor. 12:11**

**All these (gifts) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.**

\* Both men and women receive gifts. The words “man” and “him” above are merely referring to an individual person and are not gender specific.

 \* There is a proper way and attitude in which to employ them.

(prophesying in proportion to one’s faith, giving generously, leading diligently, showing mercy cheerfully)

\* We as a church are to **let them serve** in the gifts they have been given!

 5

**Spiritual Gifts (Slide 9)**

What do these gifts look like? How shall we define each one?

\* **Romans 12:6-8**, lists **7 different gifts**.

**Prophesying** – proclaiming the Word in public; speaking to people for and about God in order to motivate, exhort, console, and build them up; speak only when you’re sure it is God giving you the words and not yourself (“in proportion to your faith")

**Serving** – meeting the physical needs of the body on a regular basis (such as cleaning, organizing, repairing, serving food, paying bills, making bulletins, etc.)

**Teaching** – explaining the Word of God so that others can understand and apply it to their lives

**Encouraging** **(exhortation)** – lifting people spiritually and emotionally through sharing with them truths from the Word of God

**Contributing** **(giving)** – meeting the financial and material needs of others, giving generously and never grudgingly

**Leadership** – governing, overseeing the body; doing it diligently, working hard to make sure things are functioning well

**Mercy** – cheerfully dispensing God’s grace to people in need whether they deserve it or not (because none of us are worthy)

Other passages **(1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11:12)** add these **9 gifts**:

 **Apostleship** – church planting

 **Evangelism** – seeking lost souls and inviting them to receive Christ as their Savior

 **Wisdom** – being able to properly apply Biblical truths to life

 **Faith** – believing that through God ALL things are possible

**Discernment of spirits** – knowing the difference between the Spirit of God and

demonic spirits

**These last four are called “sign gifts.” They are used by God to demonstrate His power in order to build faith in believers and unbelievers.**

**Miracles**

**Healings**

**Tongues** – being able to speak the truths about God in a language one has never learned before

**Interpretation of Tongues** – being able to interpret an unknown language in order to speak the truths of God

Other gifts mentioned elsewhere in the Bible are:

 **Helps**

 **Hospitality**

 **Administration**

And there could be many more, for God is not limited by a list! It’s merely given to us an idea of how diverse He has made us and to let us know we all have a job to do.

 6

**Purpose and Categories of Gifts (Slide 10)**

 **1 Peter 4:10-11**

**Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.**

 **If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.**

**If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.**

What is the purpose of having and employing our gifts?

\*The gifts are given in order to serve others, to faithfully administer the grace of God to others as it has been given to you.

\* Using your spiritual gifts to serve others is done not that you would get the glory or praise, but so that God will be praised and glorified through Jesus Christ who has enabled you to minister in this way.

What are the two main categories of spiritual gifts?

 **1 Peter 4:11** breaks the gifts into two categories: **speaking** and **serving**.

A **speaking gift** is one that puts people in places of leadership or teaching, where sharing Biblical information and taking charge of a group of people is needed. These would include: prophecy, teaching, encouraging (through counsel), leadership, apostleship, evangelism, tongues and interpretation of tongues.

A **serving gift** would happen more behind the scenes and the person would be more task-oriented. This category would include: serving, encouraging (through service), giving, mercy, faith, and healings.

(Bill will share his journey about knowing his gifts and different ministries he has.)

 **(Then Slide 11)**

**What gifts have you been given?**

How can you know what spiritual gifts you have been given by God?

Ask yourself these questions:

 \* What do you enjoy doing?

\* What is a task you love to do and find you have more energy after doing it than when you began?

\* What do others see in you and say that you do well?

\* What have you done that someone told you blessed them tremendously in it?

\* What are you willing to do for free because the payoff is in the doing?

\* What has bugged you around the church that you wish someone would do?

(If it bugs you and no one else seems to notice it, perhaps God is calling you to take care of it!) 7

\* Are you a more task-oriented person (service oriented), or a more people and information oriented person (speaking, leading, teaching)?

Go to the church website – **sandyridgechurch.org** – and click on the **Spiritual Gifts Assessment**. To answer the questions will take about 7-10 minutes. The site will calculate the score you get on the gifts listed, then definitions of each gift are given below the scores. The whole exercise will take about 15-20 minutes. It’s a good place to start if you think you need a little help understanding how God is at work within you.

God has brought all of us together in one place, in the congregation here at Sandy Ridge which is a part of the larger body of Christ in Salt Lake County, the state of Utah, and the world in general.

All of us who have given our lives to Jesus Christ, accepted His gift of salvation from sin and submitted to Him as the Lord of our lives – we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit who has endowed us with spiritual gifts.

Having been saved, now we are to grow in that salvation, which means we are to learn more of what it means to be a Christian and then use that new knowledge to live a life that reflects Him to the world around us.

\*What are your spiritual gifts, talents and strengths?

\*What are your passions in life?

\*Where are you using those gifts, talents and strengths to bless the church here at Sandy Ridge or in the community and world around you?

\*Where is the Lord leading you to be a blessing?

\*What is standing in your way of going there and fulfilling His call?

\*What do you need to do to better prepare yourself to do it?

\*When will you begin that preparation or that ministry?

 **(Slide 12)**

**What is your ideal job, role or ministry?** (in God’s kingdom?)

If you were to write a job description of the ministry you would enjoy here at Sandy Ridge, what would it say?

 What would you call it?

 What would the duties be?

 Who do you see yourself working with?

 Is there anything you need to make it happen?

 If someone is already doing something similar, how could you work together?

 8

Our new Pastor Derek and the Elders of Sandy Ridge have a responsibility to oversee and set the vision of where we as a church are going and what we are to be accomplishing. But they can only steer a ship that is ready to move. We are all part of that ship, and each of us has a unique role to play in order for us to be spiritually productive. **This is not a pleasure cruise!** There should be no passengers lounging in the sun on God’s ship, no sleeping in, no getting up only to be served a lavish meal prepared by others, then cleaned up by “someone else,” mysteriously disappearing while we play shuffleboard. **We are on a ship in the middle of a war!** It’s “all hands on deck” in time of war, and we are definitely at war – with our own laziness, with the ways and things of this world, and of course with an enemy who would like to see each one of us take the easiest and the laziest way out.

I challenge each one of you to ask the Lord where you can be of service to Him.

Ask others who are close to you what they think you’d be good at.

Then please feel free to take one of the “Job Description” forms that are on the table at the back.

After you’ve prayed and asked others, after you’ve dared to put it down on the paper,

I challenge each of you to put it in the box on the back table, or to give it to one of the leaders – Derek, Kris or Lee – and talk to them about how your unique job can best fit into the overall plan for our church.

My prayer, and I believe most of yours also, is to see Sandy Ridge Church blossom and grow so that others will see the living Christ reflected in all we do and say, and as a result be drawn to the Lord of all the living.

Let us pray:

Lord, thank You for loving us so much that You died and rose again in order that we might live in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, compel each one of us to live out the unique purpose that You have designed for us. Please continue to make the body of Christ here at Sandy Ridge to work in unity, and to reflect Your goodness and mercy as we reach out our hands, our hearts, and our lives to the lost , the living and the growing members of our community. In Jesus name and through His power we ask this, Amen.

 9

**SANDY RIDGE CHURCH**

**MY IDEAL JOB, ROLE OR MINISTRY**

My Name:

Date:

What I would call it:

How I would describe it:

What I would do to accomplish it:

Spiritual gifts I have that would be helpful in this job (circle all that apply):

 Prophecy Knowledge Service Hospitality Teaching

 Faith Encouragement Helps Discernment Giving

 Administration Evangelism Wisdom Leadership Mercy

 Pastor/Teacher Miracles Healing Interpret/Tongues Tongues

Training I would need to better prepare me for it:

Equipment or supplies I would need:

Other people I would need to work with me (how many, what gifts or skills):

How often this job would be needed (circle one):

 \*Daily \*Weekly \*Monthly \*Yearly \*As Needed

How long I would be willing to do this job, role or ministry:

Other considerations:

Please fill out this form and put it in the box at the back of the Worship Center or give it directly to one of the leaders. Thank You!

Your Sandy Ridge Leadership Team