CITYLINECHURCH

Summary

This sermon explores the true meaning of the church, rooted in the Greek word "ekklesia," which means a called-out assembly of people. The pastor challenges the common misconception that the church is simply a building or a place to attend, emphasizing instead that the church is a living, breathing community of believers united in Jesus Christ. Drawing from Scripture, the message highlights that the church is a people on a mission, called to worship God, grow spiritually, and share His love with the world. The sermon also calls every believer to move beyond a consumer mindset and actively participate in God's mission. Using the analogy of a football team, the pastor illustrates how every member of the church has a unique, God-given role that is essential to the health and effectiveness of the body of Christ. Just as a team cannot win by staying in the huddle, the church cannot fulfill its calling by simply gathering together without going out and living the gospel. Every believer is gifted, needed, and called to contribute to what God is building.

Ice Breaker

What is one word you would use to describe your ideal community, and why did you choose that word?

Questions

- Bishop Sheets described the church as a 'living organism' rather than a 'lifeless organization.' What does that distinction mean to you personally, and how does it change the way you think about your role in the church?
- Have you ever felt like the only believer in your workplace or family? How did that experience shape your understanding of why Christian community is so important?
- The sermon pointed out that many people approach church with a consumer mindset, asking 'What can the church do for me?' rather than 'How does God want to use me?' Which mindset do you find yourself leaning toward most often, and what might need to change?

- Ephesians 4:16 (NIV) says the whole body 'grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.' What do you think happens to a church when a significant portion of its members are not actively using their gifts?
- Bishop Sheets used the analogy of a football huddle to describe gathering together for worship and teaching. He said the huddle is necessary but the play still has to be run. What does 'running the play' look like practically in your everyday life?
- Paul addressed division in the Corinthian church where people were aligning themselves with different leaders. In what ways do you see similar tendencies show up in churches today, and how can we guard against that kind of division?
- The sermon referenced 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV), which describes believers as 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession.' How does understanding your identity in those terms motivate you to engage more fully in the church's mission?
- Bishop Sheets closed with this question: 'What would the church be like if everyone was just like you?' How did that question land with you, and what is one specific area where you feel challenged to grow?

Key Takeaways

- The church is not a building or a place to attend. It is a living community of believers united in Jesus Christ, called to be His body on earth.
- Every believer has a unique, God-given gift and role within the church. When any member fails to use their gifts, the entire body is affected and weakened.
- Following Jesus is designed to be done in community, not in isolation. Mutual support, accountability, and shared encouragement make us spiritually stronger together.
- The church must move beyond simply gathering (the huddle) and actively engage in God's mission in the world (running the play). Gathering is necessary but not sufficient on its own.
- Unity across racial, cultural, economic, and generational lines is one of the most powerful testimonies the church can offer to a watching world, reflecting the manifold wisdom of God.

Life Application

This week, take time to reflect on the gifts, talents, and experiences God has uniquely given you. Identify one specific way you can move from being a spectator to a participant in your local church or community. Whether that means signing up to serve in a ministry, reaching out to

encourage someone in your congregation, or simply sharing your faith with someone in your everyday life, take one concrete step to 'run the play.' As a reminder, look up 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 1 Peter 4:10, and Romans 12:6-8 in your personal devotion time this week and ask God to show you clearly how He has gifted you to serve.

Ending Prayer

Lord, we thank You for this time together and for the reminder that You have called each one of us into something greater than ourselves. You have placed us in Your church with purpose, and You have gifted every single one of us to play a vital role in what You are building. Forgive us for the times we have sat on the sidelines or approached Your church with a consumer mindset. Stir something fresh in our hearts today. Give us the courage to step into the roles You have prepared for us, to use our gifts boldly, and to go out into our homes, our workplaces, and our communities as Your hands and feet. May the world see in us the unity and love that only You can produce. We want to bring You honor and glory in everything we do. In Jesus' name, amen.