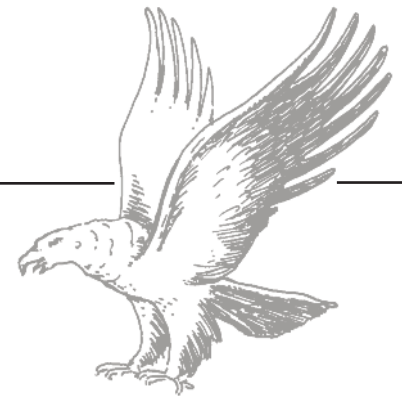


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



December 13, 2015

Teamwork

Sundays are made for church—and for NFL football. The connection between the two runs a lot deeper than you think.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. . . . If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Cor. 12:12, 26-27).

Football is my favorite sport. I am not a rabid fan of any particular team, but the mechanics of the game just fascinate me. To the uninformed observer, a football game looks like a bunch of guys running around smashing each other. But once you understand the strategy behind all the running around, you realize that you are watching a beautifully crafted example of *teamwork*.

There are eleven offensive players on the field at any given time. For every set play, each player has a specific job to execute. Those assignments can vary from play to play—which is why the team’s playbook is considered its Bible. Every player must know what is expected of him on any given play, and how to

perform his role to the best of his ability. It is the combined efforts of all eleven players working together seamlessly, play after play, that makes a championship team. (And we haven’t even addressed the defense or special teams.)

Prima donna players generally don’t last long in the NFL. A player who is more concerned about padding his personal stats is usually a poor team player. If the team suffers because of his showboating style of play, he’ll get benched or traded away. It’s all about the team.

Likewise, a player who slacks off in practice or gives a half-hearted performance in a game won’t stick around for long. If he can’t or won’t give everything he has to the effort, he is letting his team down. And if his teammates can’t depend on him to give his best, he’s gone. It sounds cruel, but it’s essential to the success of the team.

So what does all of this have to do with our spirituality? Quite a lot. Consider it a modern variation on Paul’s analogy of the church as a human body: Each one of us belongs to a team that is more important than ourselves, and our

effectiveness is amplified when we work harmoniously with a larger group of like-minded individuals. When we are all committed to following the same Playbook and respect the leadership of our Coach, we can achieve some remarkable goals. If we are willing to occasionally “take one for the team” to accomplish a greater purpose, we’ll see results that none of us could accomplish on our own. A local church that is comprised, not of hot dogs seeking to show off their talents, but of people who are dedicated to using their talents for the greater good of the group, will generally do well. Like the quarterback who heaps praise on his offensive line after a great game, we understand that whatever we accomplish, we accomplish it together—as a team.

One more thought: There are no fantasy teams in this game. We are the real deal, and we’re playing for keeps. A spot in the Hall of Fame is reserved for us, but only if we stick with the team and play to our full potential to the the end of the season.

Can our team depend on you?

– David King