

Text: 1 Peter 2.4-10  
St Stephen's

Oct 21/22, 2006  
Sat/Sun

## God's Priests

Where would you rather be in a Steelers' game, in the stands or on the field? In the action or watching it? I'll bet you have something inside you that would rather be out on the field. Golf. Tour de France. I'd rather be in the action, wouldn't you?

Somehow we seem to miss this in the church

### Here's how we start a church...

- Get 100 people get together and 'hire a minister'
- Write up his job description...
- At the end of the year we will get out our report cards, and see whether you have fulfilled our expectations. If you have you get another year! If not, we get someone else.

So we end up with a few overworked professionals with a few dedicated lay workers. The 20/80 model where 20% of the people do 80% of the work. And most people just watch the game. **Consumer Christianity.** We say, "You are the priest. You are the pastor. We expect you to meet our needs. Serve us, pastor us, pray for us, teach us, lead us in worship, visit us... And if we don't like it here, we will just go down the street." Everyone knows it is a buyers market!

Churches like this will never rise to their redemptive potential, never raise your faith temperature above luke-warm. Never probe the fires of God. Never reach a lost generation for Christ. Never change their world. Most churches in America follow this model!

But, the Bible says, God has a different plan.

**Month of October, "Living Beyond Yourself..."**

Today, look at **1 Peter 2.**

## You Are God's Priesthood

*"you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood...."*

1 Pe 2:5 (ESV)

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession..."*

1 Pe 2:9 (ESV)

Peter has his mind on **two functions** of priests in the Old Testament:

### **Priests Minister to God**

This is what Peter means when he calls us...

*"a **royal** priesthood"* 1 Peter 2.9

*"a **holy** priesthood"* 1 Peter 2.5

### **Priests Minister to People**

The priest had the privilege and responsibility of **representing God to the people** and **ministering (serving) to the needs of other people.**

This was the priestly ministry of Jesus, and Peter sums up Jesus ministry with three words in vv 4 and 5 "chosen" by God, "precious" to him and "acceptable". When you join your life to Jesus' life, your life, your ministry is touched by his, covered by his, and God speaks the same words over your service... "chosen" by God, "precious" to him and "acceptable".

### **Purpose of our priesthood...**

*"to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

1 Pe 2:5

Offer spiritual sacrifices = offering up everything you do for the sake and honor of Christ. Everything. G Bush's phrase 1000 "points of light"...

*"that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"*

1 Peter 2.9

*"...God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him"*  
(vs 9, The Message)

Can you be a priest in a sales office? You bet you can. Can you be a priest as an accountant? You bet. Driving a truck? Sure. Anywhere, everywhere.

Once you discover your ministry as a priest, and you begin to use your life the way God intended you, you get this sense...

**"This is what God made me for."**

**Lifers...**(BH 15)

You are saved to serve. Chosen to be on God's team. A non-serving Christian is a contradiction. That is a fundamental part of Jesus' purpose for your life.

Over the **next 40 Days**, from now to Thanksgiving, we are making this **a season of serving**. Take advantage of every opportunity to serve. Maybe it will be **a little thing**. Maybe **a big thing**. (Kids, students)

Help with the dishes.

Do something someone else's way.

Help someone out.

Call the office here and ask how you can help.

Stay late at work.

Keep the serving towel handy.

Look for opportunities, **ask God every day for opportunities**

*"Lord, give me someone to serve today"*, and when you see an opportunity, just say a quick prayer, and quietly get up, step in and serve.

**Tonya at work last week:** first appt cancelled. Frazzled co-worker. "Oh, I have some time, can I help you?" Co-worker: "Did God tell you to do that?" Tonya thought, "Maybe he did."

If you are willing to try this with me, let me know on a **communication card**.

Every believer has **a fundamental decision to make** – am I going to spend my life in the stands watching the game – or am I going to get out on the field and join the team.

## **The Key to the Ministry**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

1 Pe 2:4-5 (ESV)

Come to him... Line up with him... See him as precious