

accomplish. Similar points could also be considered regarding human organizations and human-made roles.

Identify your roles. Recognizing the importance of roles to really accomplishing all God wants from you, the home, and the church should lead you to carefully think about the roles you currently possess (i.e. as a husband, wife, parent, child/grandchild, church member, employee, etc.). For, if you do not take the time to identify your roles so that you know what they are, you will not consider how God wants you to fulfill them. This can result in great damage (i.e. a home where the dad does not fulfill his role of training his children in God's ways). Furthermore, you also need to carefully evaluate whether there are any roles you should fill that you are not presently filling (i.e. an elder/deacon/teacher in the church). Failing to embrace your ability to fill these roles results in either doing without these vital functions or causing an extra burden on others who do fill these roles.

Do your part. God challenges Christians to think sensibly about what they can do (including what roles they can fill, Romans 12:3). Don't think too highly or too lowly of what you can do. Simply look honestly at yourself (i.e. your situation, your abilities, your opportunities, etc.) and determine to do whatever you can to fulfill the roles God wants you to fill in the best ways you can possibly fill them! Some will find themselves in a greater number of roles than others. Some will be in more visible roles than others. Some will be in less visible roles than others. Some will be in leadership roles. Some will not be in leadership roles. Regardless of what the roles are, God simply expects you to humbly do your part to fulfill the roles in a way that honors Him (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Conclusion

Has this lesson described your attitude toward roles? Accepting these truths about the various roles involved in your life should provide you a good framework to use in obeying God in these areas. For, no matter who you are and what circumstances you find yourself in, God demonstrates that you are useful in His service and He wants you to honor Him in the situations you are in during your lifetime.



The Christian's Attitude Toward Roles

What is your attitude toward the roles you have in your life? That is, what is your mindset toward the various functions God has given you to fulfill? Do you view these roles as matters about which you get to decide whether/how you want to fulfill them? Or, do you accept the reality of the roles God has assigned? An improper attitude about the various roles God has created and assigned for His people will result in much error and unintended consequences. In contrast, a proper attitude toward these roles will result in pleasing God and in making the most of the each role.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn the various roles God has designed Christians to fulfill, consider the roles God has specifically designated, and help commit to fulfilling your roles in God's way.

God Has Designed Roles For Christians To Fulfill

In the home. The home exists by God's design (Genesis 2:22-25; not merely as a convenient arrangement designed by people). Furthermore, God has provided a blueprint for the home so that it will function according to His design. Part of this design involves roles God has set in place. For example, there are the roles of husband (Ephesians 5:25), wife (Ephesians 5:22), father (Ephesians 6:4), mother (Ephesians 6:2), and child (Ephesians 6:1) within the home according to God's pattern. Each of these roles have been designed by God to fulfill important functions that will make the home operate in the way that optimizes what God has designed, to accomplish the purpose God has for the home.

In the church. Like the home, the church also exists by God's design (Matthew 16:18; not merely as a convenient arrangement designed by people). Furthermore, God has provided a blueprint for the church so that it will function according to His design. Part of this design involves roles God has set in place. For example, there are the roles of evangelists (Ephesians

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4:11), shepherds (elders/overseers, Ephesians 4:11), teachers (Ephesians 4:11), deacons (Philippians 1:1), and saints (Philippians 1:1) within the church according to God's pattern. Each of these roles have been designed by God to fulfill important functions that will make the church operate in the way that optimizes what God has designed, to accomplish the purpose God has for the church.

In other contexts. These are not the only areas in which people have roles to fulfill. In fact, there are many other situations in life Christians may find themselves in that also have roles involved (i.e. workplace, school, government, club, organization, etc.). For example, in first century culture where slavery was common, God gave instructions concerning those who were in the roles of slave and master (Ephesians 6:5-9). Although there are many areas in which Christians find themselves in organizations and roles that have not been specifically created by God, there are still some general principles God wants applied to these situations. For example, God wants His people to work hard (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Ephesians 6:6-7; Colossians 3:22-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:11), submit to those who are in positions of authority (1 Peter 2:13-15), show respect (Romans 13:7), be peacemakers (Romans 12:18), etc. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each one to look carefully at these roles and embrace what God has assigned for each one.

Some Roles Have Been Specifically Assigned

God has designed roles in the way He knows is best. One of the central truths God's people must embrace is the fact that He always knows what is best for us in every aspect of our lives (Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36). Although the "wisdom" of this world is often contrary to the wisdom of God, the world's "wisdom" has resulted in great chaos, confusion, and trouble – and never results in truly knowing God and experiencing His salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18-21)! Therefore, we must remember this truth whenever we consider how God has given roles – and even when the roles God has assigned go against conventional human "wisdom." Thankfully, God has not left us in the dark related to the roles we are to fill in various aspects of our lives.

Specifically assigned roles in the home. We need to recognize that God has not just left these roles broadly undefined so that each family can determine what each one should look like. Rather, God has specified who should fill various functions as part of their God-given roles. For example, God has specified that the head of the home is a role given to a husband and that a wife is to submit (Ephesians 5:22-23). God has specified that children must be obedient to their parents as part of their role (Ephesians 6:1-3). God has also specified that fathers are to bring up their children in

the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4; although mothers also have a role in teaching and training their children, 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). You need to pay careful attention to what God has specifically assigned to various individuals in the home and be obedient to such.

Specifically assigned roles in the church. We need to recognize that God has not just left these roles broadly undefined so that each church can determine what each one should look like. Rather, God has specified who should fill various functions as part of their God-given roles. For example, God has specified that Christian men will fill the various roles of leading the worship of the church in the assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-14). God has also specified that those who fill the role of shepherds (elders, overseers) must possess particular characteristics (1 Timothy 3:1-7, including gender, family, and personal characteristics). God has also specified that those who fill the role of deacons (special servants of the church) must possess particular characteristics (1 Timothy 3:8-13, including gender, family, and personal characteristics). You need to pay careful attention to what God has specifically assigned to various individuals in the church and be obedient to such.

These roles are not up for negotiation. In areas where God has been very general or the organizations and roles have been created by people, there may be room for negotiation about your roles. However, in areas where God has been specific, these roles are *not* open to different interpretations or negotiations if someone does not like them. Although God gives you the free will to decide whether you will abide by the specifications of these roles, pleasing God requires that you submit yourself to Him (James 4:7). Even when you do not like what God has specified, you must trust God enough to know that He really does know best (Proverbs 3:5-7).

Commit To Fulfilling Your Roles

The importance of roles. The fact that God created roles and cared enough to specify several demonstrates that they must be important! For, it is unreasonable to conclude that God carefully created and specified various roles for no good reason. God demonstrates the importance of roles by comparing them to having various functions in the body (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Just like no one member of your body is capable of being the entire body, no one person is capable of being a church or a family. So, like a body, the church and the home must have the various members functioning in their God-designed roles! Without this, a church and home are handicapped from accomplishing all God desires them to