

“LESSONS FROM THE FOOTBALL FIELD:
I – BE A TEAM PLAYER”
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World Communion Sunday

I Corinthians 1:10-13

John 17:6-18

Well, here we are in October, and it looks like cooler weather is finally here! It's one of the reasons I like this time of year best, and another reason is that it's football season! After enduring a pretty sad summer of watching my beloved Phillies falter, I was more than ready to turn my attention to the Eagles!

And I know a lot of you are football fans as well. Many of you are Ravens' fans, but I know there are a fair number of Steelers fans in our church as well, not to mention those of you who root for the Cowboys, the Patriots, the Lions and more.

Well, being a great football fan, you can imagine how excited I was a number of years ago to officiate a wedding where the groom was an offensive lineman for the San Francisco 49ers! It was great. Brian and all of the groomsmen had graduated from the University of North Carolina and had played football there, and almost all of them had been drafted into the NFL.

So it was through Brian that I came to know a lot about life as an NFL player. And one of the most amazing things I learned was how much the quarterbacks value their offensive linemen. So much so, that pretty much every year, after the season ends, the quarterbacks give their offensive linemen gifts. And this is out of their own pockets, by the way.

Now, when I say gifts, that's an understatement. Well, sometimes they are things like really expensive watches, or brand new laptops, but Brian told me about a quarterback who gave each of his offensive linemen a Ford F150 truck! He gave them all trucks!

Why? Because they had taken care of him, protected him throughout the season. They had his back. They played as a team, watching out for one another, trying to be the best for one another, working as a well-oiled machine to be the best they could be. They weren't in it for themselves, they were in it for the team, they were unified in their efforts.

In many ways, the church of Jesus Christ is like a team. Every person has gifts that the team needs, everyone can contribute in some way, we all have the

same mission in mind – to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. And though the church of Jesus Christ throughout the world is diverse, we are one in our commitment to him and him alone as the source of life and salvation.