

### Philippians

by Peter Steinke

### Part Three

#### Introduction

Everyone has a place within a group. Each has a role. Some roles are headlines; others are "supporting cast" or "make-up crews." But all count. Timothy and Epaphroditus were co-workers with Paul. The whole congregation at Philippi "entered into partnership" with Paul. No wonder Paul underlines his message with the words, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others," citing the model of Christ humbling Himself "in the form of a servant."

Now let us discover how each of us, "in the form of a servant," always has a place in the community of Christ. That servant role has a place whether singing or serving, whether listening to a friend's problem or leading a group in decision-making. Paul could not do his service (MINISTRY) without the partnership of others. In ministry, everyone belongs. Every baptized person has a role.

#### Role Playing

Check the roles in the list below that you can play:

- son/daughter
- job-holder
- reader
- unique person
- believer/worshiper
- friend/helper
- automobile driver
- dreamer
- family member
- learner/student
- philosopher
- activist/doer
- leader
- teacher/counselor
- musician
- listener
- follower
- actor
- organizer
- decision-maker
- student

How many roles can you play?

Which ones do you play best?

Which ones are your favorites?

How could your "best" and "favorite" roles become ministries?

#### Readings

Read Philippians 2:1-11.

Select one role you checked off, and after reading this section from Philippians, describe how "affection," "sympathy," or any other quality listed could help you in your ministry roles.

Read Philippians 3:17.

What difference is there between the “righteousness of my own” and the “righteousness from God that depends on faith?” How would self-righteousness affect your role as a minister of Jesus Christ? And faith?

### **The Role of Christ**

Read the teenager’s comments below. Discuss the “role” of Christ in your life.

Everyone has certain things expected of them from school, peers, people at work, church members and family. All these roles are important, but it is important not to lose the identity that God has given us in the midst of all these other expectations.

Perhaps Carla is active in sports simply because her parents expect her to fill this role. But she feels uncomfortable and doesn’t enjoy the competition. Maybe she should find another activity she enjoys.

God gives us our feelings, tastes and talents. If they don’t fit with what others expect of us, we can’t fight it without compromising ourselves. If we compromise too often, we end up compromising ourselves into non-identity, trying to do the impossible task of pleasing everyone.

We know that God accepts us and loves us as we are, regardless of our roles. Jesus didn’t conform to what everyone expected of Him. The Pharisees and church men didn’t expect to find Him among the poor, tax collectors, fishermen, women, lepers and sinners. But He knew what His task from God was and He performed it, no matter what others expected of Him.

Certainly changing water into wine, feeding thousands with two fish and one loaf of bread, or giving a blind man his sight were not the roles many people expected of Him. Jesus was anything but ordinary. He conformed only to the purpose that God designed for Him, and He played that role.

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