

Her name is Kaitlyn DiBenedetto, but her band goes by the name “Just Kait.” The band consists of just Kait. She plays all the instruments and sings all the vocals. She is a 16 year old “One Man or should I say Woman Band.” Her music has been featured on MTV and the “E” channel. When I was attending the seminary in St. Louis, I heard the classic rock group “Three Dog Night” perform their hit song “One Man Band” that includes the lyrics, “I just wanna be your one man band.” I’ve played on teams where one guy thought he was the whole team, he didn’t need anyone else. It wasn’t long ago that the U.S. Army’s recruiting slogan was “An Army of One.”

None of these things work. A band by definition needs multiple people. Newly married couples discover very quickly that they can’t totally meet their partner’s needs. Coaches are always telling their players that there is no “I” in team. And I have no idea how in the world they came up with the idea of an army of one. That would never work.

What doesn’t work in music, relationships, sports or the military won’t work in the church either. St. Paul told the Christians in Corinth, ***“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.”*** (1 Corinthians 12:12 NLT) The Church is not a “one person” band. I may be the Pastor of this church, but I am not the church. The moment I begin to think that is the moment I’m in big trouble. And if you were ever to go along with that thought, we would all be in big trouble. Some churches have the problem of only a few people trying to do everything. That doesn’t work either. A lot of older, smaller churches are stuck in a rut because one small group or one family controls everything. That means there is no room for anyone else. But that is now how it should be.

The church is body of Christ, made of a wide variety of people with a multitude of gifts and abilities. We need each other. Paul asked this question in his letter to the Corinthians, ***“If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?”*** (1 Corinthians 12:17 NLT) You wouldn’t. If everyone in the church was the same, we wouldn’t be able to do a lot of the things that God wants us to do. Just as our human body is made up of many different parts, the church is made of many different members, each unique and important. We are not all the same and are not all expected to do the same thing.

If you go to a Starbucks and your order a vanilla double latte, you expect it to be exactly the same drink at every store regardless where you order it. Starbucks trains their employees to make the exact same drink whether you are in the neighborhood, at the mall or at an airport Starbucks. What works well Starbucks would be disastrous in the church. If everyone had a vision for the church, nothing would get done. If everyone had administrative skills but no creative thoughts, the ministry would be irrelevant and boring. If everyone was a leader and no one was willing to serve, the offering would never be counted, the bills would never be paid and the bathrooms would never be clean. Who wants to come to a church with no power or heat and dirty bathrooms? No one that I know!

That is why God's Spirit gives us a variety of gifts. List to some of the gifts listed by Paul. *“Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages.”* (1 Corinthians 12:28 NLT) This is not the total and complete list of spiritual gifts. But it is a big enough list to make the point. God gives a bunch of different gifts to different people because we need them in the church. Even if your gift is not mentioned here, that doesn't mean it is not important.

What is important is that we all share the same purpose; that we are working together to grow God's family and to reach out to others in love. We call Peace “A family of believers making and growing new lives in Christ.” Our vision is reaching those outside of God's family, growing with them in faith, and together serving the Lord and others in His name.

It takes a lot of people to get that done. That is especially true in today's economy with limited financial resources. We can't pay for everything that needs to be done. But if everyone would be willing to use their gifts and give of their time in service, we could do a whole lot more. Since this church is our church, we need each other to get involved. That is why you'll find this handout on “How to Get Involved” in your bulletin today. As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities for everyone. If you are not already involved in the ministry of Peace or are looking for some other things to do, take a look through the booklet, find something that you can or want to do and volunteer. Look for something that you enjoy doing or for a need that just isn't being met.

One final thought, spiritual gifts can and should be used outside of the church. Don't limit yourself to things that you can do in the church or for the church. The Lord has put you in some very unique spots to help people, to extend his love in acts of service to them. Don't pass them by. And remember, you don't have to ask someone in the church for permission. You may want to check the schedule if you need the use of the church facilities. If you has given you the time, the ability and the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of people around you, don't miss it. Next week we are going to talk about the greatest gift, the gift of love. Amen.