



# Links Players

## ON LOCATION 4: PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

*For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. (Romans 12:4-5, NIV)*

**I**F YOU PLAY WITH A REGULAR FOURSOME, you have likely each formed identities through the years. One in your group is a great putter, another drives the ball especially straight, a third keeps you laughing, and you might be the one who sets the competitive tone when you are all playing a tournament together. These are only examples, of course, of the many possible golfing personalities you can find, and if your foursome actually draws from a larger group of six or seven, the mashup can really vary from week to week.

What may be lacking in your foursome is a sense of purpose beyond simply enjoying one another’s company. Tournament play can change this, but when four players are teamed together, it usually means a scramble, so the feeling is a relaxed one.

Our communities of faith also bring together people of all personalities and giftings. But we never lack a common purpose, for God equips us to serve one another and contribute to each other’s spiritual growth. This is called ministry, something to which we are all called in the body of Christ.

Hopefully, you have already learned of your own ministry calling along the way, though it’s a lesson that can be missed. Depending on your church background (if you have one), you may be conditioned to see a separation between clergy and laity, where “the people up front” are the ministers and “the people in the seats” are those receiving ministry.

Scripture makes no such delineation. Yes, there are leaders like pastors, elders, and teachers, but these gifts of the Holy Spirit land among a bigger list. Those with faith or generosity, those who serve or encourage freely, those who administrate behind the scenes or show mercy in the quiet corner of hospital room—they are not an ounce less important in the community of the Savior and the discipling work of his kingdom. And you are among them!

For this reason, we not only enjoy one another’s company as a golf foursome does. Rather, we minister alongside each other, and to each other, and for each other, growing in Christ and honoring him.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video to accompany this study is available at <https://youtu.be/OvV66aj4KxE>.

**Opening questions** By what traits have you come to know some of those with whom you enjoy the game? • Who is a brother or sister in Christ you appreciate because of how they minister to others?

**READING** 1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:1-8; Romans 16:1-16

### The body and you (1 Corinthians 12)

Have you ever thought of yourself as part of the body of Christ? If so, what contributions do you find yourself capable of making? How much do you recognize the Holy Spirit’s influence on your ability to contribute?

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### What we are given (Romans 12)

How do we come by the gifts of God? What are some of these? How should being reminded that what we have is from God affect our perspective on ourselves and others (see verse 3)?

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### Our co-laborers (Romans 16)

Scanning this list, what are some characteristics of the people noted by Paul? Who are people with whom you share life and ministry in Christ? What strengths do they bring to you and to others?

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