

Devotions

Dear Coaches,

Here are some brief devotions that you can use with your team. We hope that you find them useful in helping to inspire good sportsmanship and Christ like ethics within your team and the league. We encourage you to use these or to develop your own practice time routine that includes a few minutes focused on our call to be Christ's disciples in all areas of our lives. Thank you.

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”

Colossians 3:23

Team Work

Teams always play best when they have a sense of team, that selfless attitude that takes the players out of the mind set of playing for themselves and in to the mend set of playing for the team. With this attitude, when the team gets glory, the player gets glory. Outstanding individual performance means little if the team does not perform well as a whole.

Have you ever wondered about the difference between many good and great players and good and great teams? Skill is obviously important but it is not the key difference. The catalyst is a different attitude. Good or average teams and players are willing to work to support the team. Great teams and players are eager to give their best unselfishly for the good of the team.

Being a Christian is all about being a team player and submitting to one another out of love. The attitude is, “Give the other person the glory,” and “Let the other person go first.” So today, let your game plan be to pick someone else on your team and play each and every play for them. Play selflessly. Play without trash talk. Play with humility. Play with dignity. Play with class.

At the end of practice you will all be able to say, “We had a great practice today. We all played for the team and we played with the hearts of champions.” Unity matters!

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12:12

Dear God,

Thank you for each person on our team. Help us to be encouraging and supportive while we learn and grow together as a team. Teach us how to play selflessly so that we might represent how you show your selfless love to us and the world. Amen.

Initiative

Initiative is often misunderstood because it is not about meeting a performance goal; it is about going the extra mile. Initiative is about identifying a need and championing a solution for the benefit of the team without being asked to do so.

There is no magic to initiative, just a sense of responsibility for the well being of the whole team. Initiative is about taking steps to make your team better, not about wasting time on unimportant matters. To make the distinction, try determining the impact that your actions will make on your teams performance.

Life and sports both require initiative, but before you begin your initiative quest, make sure your heart is in the right place so that you can help your team to be the best it can be. Now, the only question is how much initiative will you demonstrate today?

“I press on towards the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 3:14

Holy One,

Great is thy faithfulness to us each and every day. Teach us to be as faithful and to go that extra mile. Help us to take action that will improve not just our individual performance but that will help the overall team performance. Let us not be fearful to exercise initiative that will inspire and motivate us to be the best that we can be for you. Amen

Skills

We all have our talents and skills. We each much identify what we feel we are best suited for and then develop the skills in that area to make us better. Like the old saying goes, practice makes perfect. Skill is developed and increased through hard work and practice.

A very tall basketball player has advantages in many skills over a short player, however, the short player has advantages over the tall player in many areas too. They can both be great players depending upon the skills that they each work on. We can all develop the skills of the game while also working on specialized skills in the area where we are most suited.

Research has shown people whose thoughts are centered on higher level goals such as “I want to be a Division 1 athlete” versus “I need to practice shooting today” maintained a higher level of intensity, self-discipline, and quality of practice. Be a dreamer of great dreams and fill your mind with those thoughts.

We all have the inner ability to be skillful in whatever field we select, it just takes the desire to develop the skills. God gives us the ability, what comes next is up to us.

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us ...”

Romans 12:6a

Faithful Lord,

Thank you for the varied skills, talents, and abilities on our team. Help us to stay focused during practice so that we might further develop our skills together for the betterment of the team. Amen.

Self Control

“Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.”

Seneca

Self-control is a vital skill if you want to be a great athlete, student, musician, or artist. Research shows the importance of self-control. Students with higher self-control work out with more intensity and personal discipline. It is a crucial skill which can be improved.

Change up your routing. Instead of losing your cool when you find yourself becoming aggravated or frustrated, find constructive ways to occupy your thoughts which distract you from losing your self-control. In the book of Proverbs it says, “A fool gives full vent to his anger.” So remember, controlling what you say, thank, and do requires becoming wise. Be wise and work on self-control.

Always remember that your tongue is just as much a part of the game as anything else. Honor one another with your words and your actions.

“Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

Galatians 5:26

God of the Universe,

We pray that you would keep our heads on rights and our eyes focused on you. Keep our feet on the path and our hearts desiring what is good. In this world, we know that everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Help is to know the difference and when we know the difference help us to be disciplined enough to make the right choices. Amen.

Enthusiasm

To full achieve the best of which you're capable, you must LOVE what you do! Hard work and enthusiasm are bound together. Hard work without enthusiasm leads to boredom. Enthusiasm without hard work leads to unrealized potential. When they are present together they create a solid foundation leading to success!

Enthusiasm is incredibly infectious. It rubs off on everyone who comes in contact with you. You communicate your enthusiasm through your words, voice quality, and body language. Enthusiasm intensifies your focus and ignites your hard work.

The most enthusiastic players look for the best in themselves and others. Your enthusiasm will work like a magnet drawing out confidence and performance qualities to help you and your teammates. Bringing enthusiasm to the most mundane and to the extremely enjoyable drills or plays in practice and games takes you one step closer to success.

Enthusiastically encouraging each other creates team spirit and a team with a good spirit will be able to out excel another team with the spirit of dissention.

“Do you know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.”

1 Corinthians 9:24

Creator God,

You have uniquely and divinely created us and filled us with your love and joy. Ignite in us an overwhelming enthusiasm for life that explodes in to everything that we are and do. This is our prayer. Amen.

Reliability

What would happen to a sports team if:

- Team members didn't come to practice?
- Team members didn't exercise and get their bodies into good physical shape?
- Team members didn't show up for the game?

There would be disorganization, injuries, and forfeited games; complete chaos! And, that is just not what is needed to have a successful team. We need reliability.

Reliability means that others can depend on you. You keep your commitments and give your best in every situation. You are responsible. You don't forget and you don't need to be reminded. Other people can relax knowing that you are going to do your part and meet your obligations.

So, are you Mr./Miss Reliability? Can your team count on you?

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.”

Deuteronomy 7:9

Gracious Lord,

You committed yourself and your love to us. You never fall short, give up or quit on us. Let us be like you in the commitments that we make. Let us be faithful in all that we do so that others might come to glorify your name. Amen.

Confidence

There is a great difference between being confident and being “cocky.” Confidence is knowing that you can succeed. Being “cocky” is trying to show everyone else you think you can.

Confidence is an attitude which allows a person to have positive yet realistic views of themselves and their situations. Confident people who trust their God given abilities have a general sense of control in their life, and believe that, within reason, they will be able to do what they wish, plan, and expect.

Confidence does not mean that you will be able to do everything, but it does allow you to approach new experiences as opportunities to learn rather than occasions to win or lose. Confidence allows you to give yourself credit for everything you try.

By focusing on what you can do, you applaud yourself for effort rather than outcome!

“I can do all things through him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

God of Strength,

You are mighty in all that you do. You hold each of us in the palm of your hand and provide all that we need to be successful in all our endeavors. Give us that confidence to walk in boldness because of who you are and what you can accomplish through us. Amen.

Good Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship encompasses many aspects of a person's character, the most fundamental being respect. The good sportsman respects both their teammates and their opponents as equals. They play with integrity. A win that doesn't come fairly holds no satisfaction for them.

Good sportsmen are honest in their dealings with opponents because they treat them the way they want to be treated. They are unselfish in their desire to see all of their teammates participate and enjoy the game. A good sportsman is humble in victory and has the proper perspective on losses. In short, the qualities that go into making a good person are the same ones that contribute to being a great sportsman.

Good sportsmanship truly enhances the experience of both playing and watching a game. So always strive to play fair, be a team player, stay positive, avoid trash talking, lose gracefully, win with class, and respect teammates, officials, and fans.

“May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.”

2 Thessalonians 3:5

God of All,

Bless all of the athletes here today. Thank you for the skills that you have given each of them. Help us all to use them in the way that you meant us to. Help us have fun and to play fairly. May our actions and good sportsmanship be a demonstration of our witness to Jesus Christ.

Amen

Additional Prayer Suggestions

Popcorn Prayers; As the coach you can begin the prayer but then let each player add a line to the prayer as you go around the circle

Initiative Prayer; Ask one of your players who wants to take the initiative to lead the team in prayer.

Teamwork Prayer; Have each player find a partner and have them share one prayer concern or joy with each other. Then ask them to take turns praying for each other.

Silent Prayer; Play a CD of worship music and let the group be soaked in God's presence while they pray in silence.

If you would like additional information on how to incorporate these or other devotional ideas in to your regular practice please don't hesitate to contact the Wellness Ministry staff; Donna, Kevin and Monty, or Beth Bell, our Every Member has a Ministry Coordinator. Any of us would be delighted to assist you.