Essentials 6 and 7:

**Identify, Equip and Release Leaders and Function as a Team**

Study Guide: Functioning as a Team in God's Church

**Key Takeaways:**

1. The church is meant to function as a unified team with Christ as the head.

2. Clear leadership, understood goals, assigned roles, and continuous growth are essential for a winning team.

3. Every member has a part to play in the mission of the church.

4. Spiritual maturity comes through trusting and obeying God over time.

5. We should celebrate growth and speak truth in love to encourage one another.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How does the analogy of a sports team help you understand the church's role better? What aspects resonate with you?

2. The sermon mentions that some view church attendance like being a spectator in a stadium. Have you ever felt this way? How can we shift from being spectators to active participants?

3. Discuss the five characteristics of a healthy biblical disciple-making team mentioned in the sermon. Which one challenges you the most and why?

4. How does the concept of "speaking the truth in love" apply to encouraging others in their spiritual growth?

5. The speaker shared a personal struggle with perfectionism. How might perfectionism or fear of failure hold us back from serving in the church?

6. Reflect on the Theodore Roosevelt quote. How does this apply to our involvement in church ministry?

**Practical Applications:**

1. Identify one area where you can become more involved in the church's mission this week. Share with the group and commit to taking action.

2. Practice "speaking the truth in love" by sharing a specific encouragement with someone in the group about their spiritual growth.

3. Reflect on your spiritual journey. Write down three ways you've matured in your faith over the past year and share with the group.

4. If you're not currently serving in a ministry, research opportunities in your church and pray about where God might be calling you to serve.

5. Commit to praying for your church leaders and fellow members daily this week, asking God to strengthen the unity and effectiveness of your church team.

**5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide:**

**Day 1: Abiding in Christ**

Reading: John 15:1-11

Devotional: Jesus calls us to abide in Him, just as branches remain connected to the vine. This intimate connection is the source of our spiritual life and fruitfulness. Reflect on your current relationship with Christ. Are you drawing near to Him daily through prayer and His Word? Consider how you can deepen your abiding relationship with Jesus today. Remember, apart from Him, we can do nothing of eternal value.

**Day 2: Reaching the Lost**

Reading: Luke 15:1-10

Devotional: Jesus' heart for the lost is beautifully illustrated in these parables. He rejoices over each person who comes to faith. As His followers, we're called to share this passion for reaching those far from God. Think about your own circle of influence. Who in your life needs to hear the Gospel? Pray for opportunities to share God's love with them, and for the courage to act on those opportunities.

**Day 3: Connecting the Unconnected**

Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Devotional: The early church modeled deep, authentic community. They shared life together, supporting one another spiritually and practically. In our increasingly isolated world, the church should stand out as a place of genuine connection. How can you foster deeper relationships within your church family? Consider inviting someone new to share a meal or join your small group. Be intentional about creating space for meaningful connections.

**Day 4: Shepherding Towards Spiritual Maturity**

Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16

Devotional: God's desire is for every believer to grow into spiritual maturity, becoming more like Christ. This passage emphasizes the role of church leaders in equipping believers for ministry and the importance of speaking the truth in love to one another. Reflect on your own spiritual growth journey. Are you actively pursuing maturity in Christ? How can you contribute to the growth of others in your faith community?

**Day 5: Functioning as a Team**

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional: The body of Christ is diverse, with each member playing a vital role. Just as a physical body needs all its parts to function properly, the church needs every believer to use their God-given gifts and abilities. Consider your unique role within the body of Christ. Are you actively using your gifts to serve others and build up the church? Pray for guidance in discovering or developing your role within your local church community.