

March 2021 - Six Nations

I could not call myself a fan of sport. In fact I hardly follow any sports at all, but I do enjoy watching the Six Nations Rugby. However for many of the matches I find myself wondering who to support. If England are playing, I usually want England to win. But I have had many wonderful holidays in Wales and Scotland, so I rather like them too. And our dog is originally from Ireland, so maybe I should support them sometimes? Added to this, I always want a team to win if they are playing well, whoever they are. But I generally feel sorry for a losing team and want them to play better, so they don't lose. In my ideal rugby match, both teams would win. So, as you can see, it gets complicated!

Over the years, I have often reflected on why I enjoy watching the Six Nations. I am sure that at least part of it is that I hugely enjoy seeing the quality of the team work that good rugby teams always display. I'm certainly no expert, but it seems to me that you cannot be a good rugby player on your own. Even the very best players are heavily dependent on their fellow team members to enable them to play well. I'm pretty sure that a team where the members are not keenly aware of one another's strengths and weaknesses, and where they are not working well together has very little chance of winning.

Maybe international rugby has something to teach our churches? In the New Testament letters we read of the apostle Paul urging the very first Christian Churches to build community, and I suspect that the communities he was urging them to build might have looked something like good rugby teams. Paul urged early Christians to put the same effort and focus into loving and serving one another that a top class athlete puts into their training. Paul and Jesus both taught that all our gifts and skills are to be used for the good of the whole community, the whole team if you like. I feel truly blessed to live in communities and churches with among the strongest sense of community I have experienced anywhere, but my prayer is still that we will keep up the training!

Yours in Christ,
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