



October 2, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

1 Peter 2:24

INFO

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"THE "TUSH PUSH" IS PART OF THE GAME

The "Tush Push," more politely known as "pushing the pile," has recently become pretty familiar to professional football fans.¹ It's a way of almost guaranteeing that an offensive play will gain enough for a first down in a short yardage situation. The quarterback receives the ball from the center and immediately drives forward. Meanwhile, one or two very large players **plow into his rear end** to add their weight to form a 600-to-700 pound wedge that overwhelms the other team's defensive linemen and advances the ball to make the first down or touchdown.²

A pastor is kind of like the quarterback of a church. Over my sixty years in the ministry, I've often had the feeling that I was going up against impossible odds, and there was no chance I could advance the ball. Then I'd hear a voice of a faithful old church member, "Pastor, I'm praying for you"; or a Deacon would give me an encouraging nudge at just the right time. In some magic moments, several people in the congregation have come through with support at same time and have given me just the "Tush Push" I needed. I think that God, the Church's Coach, has called those plays, and that's why they've succeeded.

I couldn't locate a Bible passage specifically about the "Tush Push," but there's no shortage of texts about the importance of teamwork. If you replace the Apostle Paul's metaphorical description of the Church as **one body** with the image of **one team**, this familiar passage reads . . .

Just as the team is one and has many members, and all the members of the team, though individuals, are one team, so it is with Christ. . . . Indeed, the team does not consist of one member but of many. If an offensive lineman would say, "Because I am not a running back, I do not belong to the team," that would not make him any less a part of the team. And if the center would say, "Because I am not the quarterback, I do not belong to the team," that would not make him any less a part of the team. If the whole team were a quarterback, where would the running power be? If the whole team were quick-footed receivers, who would do the blocking? But as it is, God arranged the members in the team, each one of them, as he chose. If all members had the same gifts and skills, where would the team be? As it is, there are many members yet one team. The running back cannot say to the tight end, "I have no need of you," nor again the quarterback to the tackles, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the team who receive less attention are indispensable, and those members of the team who don't get much credit, we go out of our way to pat them on the back because we respect their importance to the team. (1 Corinthians 12:14, 16-23)

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Momentum is often referred to as “The Big Mo” because it’s so critical to winning a football game between closely matched teams. If it’s going against you, your team’s in trouble. It’s hard to change it, but it’s not impossible. Sometimes momentum can be reversed by a *trick play*, ending in an amazing long pass by the quarterback to his streaking athletic receiver. However, I believe it’s more often changed by something as undramatic and unnoticeable as an awkward-looking play that moves the ball a few inches.

In ABC’s history, we’ve often found that Homecoming Sunday has a big effect on the Church’s momentum, so that’s what we’re looking forward to on Sunday, November 3. We’ve chosen the theme “Home Again” because we’re not promising that anything awesome or dramatic will happen. It won’t be a particularly special Homecoming; just one in a series ---“Home Again.

The quarterback has called the team together. The players will gather in the huddle as the Coach sends in just the right play. It’s not likely to be a fancy “flea-flicker” that knocks the crowds socks off. It’s probably going to be a little “Tush Push” to keep to us all moving forward. But we believe it will help us gain The Big Mo we need to reach the goal God has for us. Thanks for the part you play.

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ <https://www.today.com/news/sports/tush-push-nfl-controversy-rcna128553> This is fairly new in football because of changes in traditional rules. The Philadelphia Eagles were the first to popularize this play, so it’s also been labeled the “Brotherly Shove” (Philly is the *City of Brotherly Love* – Get it?)

² American football purists complain that this looks more like an English rugby scrum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUz1ytcnn3c>. Others think about the popular line dance of the same name: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq-YpbysuqE&t=46s>