

## **Watch the Bench**

### **Ready:**

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:11

### **Set**

One of my favorite things to do during March Madness is to watch the bench. The bench is where you can see the basketball team’s bond and tight-knit family circle.

When a player makes a big shot, an unbelievable move or a crucial play, the bench erupts in celebration. Players jump, cheer, make faces and do some crazy things. When a player gets hurt, messes up or misses a shot, the bench reacts in encouragement, shouts of support and feedback to help pick up their player. Even though the bench is in the background of the game, it is a crucial part of it.

Most games are not as tense or highly watched as a March Madness game; however, the bench/sideline is just as crucial. Whether it’s a rival game or a jamboree, the bench/sideline can make or break the team’s outcome and overall chemistry. The stronger the sideline and bench are, the stronger the players on the field are. When players have their entire team locked in and cheering them on or helping them up, they play more confidently, passionately, and to their fullest effort.

A strong sideline/bench is not just what coaches want; it’s what God wants. He desires us to encourage and build each other up. He created community and desires for us to live in community. When we build each other up, it not only helps the specific person but the entire team. In a pyramid, if one brick is weak, the pyramid is weak. It’s the same for a team.

God desires those on and off the team to be built up, encouraged, loved and supported. He wants us to use our faith, light and love to watch those around us and see who needs to be cheered on and who needs to be picked up.

We all sit on the bench of God’s team and should encourage and build up our brothers and sisters in Christ who are playing the game of life. A strong bench makes a strong team.

### **Go**

- What does a quiet and distracted bench/sideline do to a game?
- How can you encourage and build up your teammates?
- How can you challenge your team to become closer and more of a family unit?

### **Workout**

Proverbs 27:17

John 15:13

Ephesians 4:29

### **Overtime**

“God, I want to be a light for my team. Help me to see who needs encouragement and who needs to be built up. Let me love like You and help strengthen my team. Amen.”



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8701 Leeds Road | Kansas City, MO 64129 | 800.289.0909

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