

You in the Ministry

Do you know anyone in the Christian ministry? More than likely your thoughts go immediately to some person who is regarded as a minister because he preaches. It is true that that person is in the ministry. But what about the Christian who is a plumber, a salesman, or a lawyer, as well as a church member? Is the ministry for him or her? What about you, if you believe in Jesus Christ, are you in the ministry?

One of the most damaging ideas to come out of the Middle Ages and the huge church structure in that period is the idea that the Christian ministry is only for the professional religionist such as priest or clergymen. This idea is foreign to the New Testament. It is an Old Testament concept, in part being forced upon Christ's church and it simply does not fit. As a result, the church is weakened in her life and work because only a handful of people are carrying the load of a whole group of Christians.

What constitutes Christian ministry and who is a Christian minister? Every Christian is a minister of the Lord's and is called to do the work of ministering.

Now don't misunderstand, God does call and equip special workers in the Church. These pastor-teachers are enabled by the Spirit of God to stimulate and equip the whole body of believers to do the work of ministering.

This is exactly what Paul teaches in Ephesians 4: "...and He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers..." – these are ministry gifts of people with special callings and enablements – and they are placed in the church for what reason? (*Listen!*) **"..for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ..."**(Eph. 4:10-12,NASB).

Here's another translation: "...to prepare God' people; for works of service (that's ministry) so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the followers of Christ."

The New Testament teaching is that the church is a body in which every member has a necessary function. We all have a ministry toward the rest of the body and each

ministry is as important as any other. To do the work of ministry God equips each member of the body with a particular gift of the Spirit, or maybe with several gifts.

What kind of ministry are we to be engaged in doing? Let's consider several of them.

Each Christian is called to minister to the Lord in worship. Listen to these words from the Bible, "Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Psalm 95

Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe. Hebrews 12:28

"I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the LORD, the Most High." Psalm 7:17

"Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!" Psalm 149:1

"Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts!" Psalm 96:8

We are to give offerings of our money to God and this giving is an outflow of our love to Him who first loved us.

The **Bible says**, "Honor the Lord by **giving** him the first part of all your income" (Proverbs 3:9 TLB)

The point is this: "...whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹ As it is written,

"He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever." 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

In addition, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is to function in the priesthood. This primarily consists of the ministry of corporate worship and intercessory prayer directly to God on behalf of others. This is plainly taught in 1 Peter 2:4-5 ⁴ Coming to Him, (Jesus) a living stone—rejected by men but chosen and valuable to God— ⁵ *you yourselves, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your

hearts to God.” Colossians 3:16. Or we read in Ephesians 5:19, *Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.*

And in Ephesians 6:18 “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”

Every Christian has the calling and the ability to instruct, to teach one another God’s truth. In Romans 15:14 he says to that congregation he loved: “I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.”

Evangelism is another ministry that all Christian believers should be engaged in - it is the ministry of reconciliation. All Christians are ambassadors or envoys for Christ’s Kingdom. We are called to simply share in our relationships with others the message of Jesus Christ as the way to God. There are special evangelists in the church but also each believer is to be a channel for the love of God to flow toward those who do not yet know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there is the ministry toward other believers. God intends for every believer in a local body of believers to be serving one another. This especially includes the idea of sharing the Word of God in the corporate setting. It is through our meeting together as communities of faith that we are enabled to be an encouragement to other believers. This what is behind the author of Hebrews admonition in Hebrews 10:24-25, “And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Listen to Peter’s counsel to Christians: “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ* “(1 Pet. 4:8-11, NIV).

Let us not forget that our daily work, our occupation or job is an area of ministry. Whatever our job, be it professional or skilled, from janitor to physician, from house cleaning to teaching, is to be done with integrity and as unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:22 says, “**You who are servants who are owned by someone, obey your owners. Work hard for them all the time**, not just when they are watching you. Work for them as you would for the Lord because you honor God.”

²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

God has called you and me as members of Christ’s body to the ministry. We are in the ministry. The question is, “How are we ministering to one another?” Are we being faithful in our exercise of the ministry? As stewards of God’s varied gifts let us be faithful in the careful and responsible management of what God has entrusted to our care on behalf of others.

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