



Truth Matters

A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

Scripture Reading
Week of
October 16th -22nd



Monday

- ❖ Jeremiah 25, 26
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 4
- ❖ Hebrews 2

Tuesday

- ❖ Jeremiah 27, 28
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 5
- ❖ Hebrews 3

Wednesday

- ❖ Jeremiah 29, 30
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 6
- ❖ Hebrews 4

Thursday

- ❖ Jeremiah 31, 32
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 7
- ❖ Hebrews 5

Friday

- ❖ Jeremiah 33, 34
- ❖ Ecclesiastes 8
- ❖ Hebrews 6

Saturday

- ❖ Jeremiah 35, 36

Sunday

- ❖ Jeremiah 37, 38

Dynamic Church-Life:

Every Member Ministering, Part 1

For decades now, the institutionalized evangelical church in America has turned Ephesians 4:11-12 precisely on its head.

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Over the decades, the church has taken that to mean “every member must be involved in a ministry.” I ask you, “Is that true?” Must every member be involved in a ministry? We have come to emphasize one word of that sentence over all the other words. If the over-emphasis is true, let me share with you the pressure that is placed on pastors

- One, it becomes my job to find out what your particular spiritual gift is and where it can best be used in ministry.
- Second, I must continually be coming up with more and more programs / ministries with which to plug people into.
- Third, with every program comes the need for a trained leader so that we have ministers trained in music who lead those plugged into the music program; we must have youth ministers trained in youth ministries who lead those plugged into the youth; we must have pastors trained in sociology who can act as visitation pastors for equipping those who excel in evangelism; we have senior adult pastors for plugging in the senior saints; campus pastors, women ministry pastors, children’s ministry pastors, etc. Before long, the church becomes a mega organization as opposed to a biblical organism.

In short, the pastor becomes a CEO responsible for a large corporation.

Do you see the over-emphasized word? Let me refresh your memory as to the presupposition: every member must be involved in a ministry. Which word receives too much attention?

Consider these two questions:

1. How many ministries does our church have?
2. How many ministers does our church have?

If you think like the program-driven institutionalized church, your answers

.....continued on page 2

Dynamic Church-Life:

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...Continued

would sound something like, "We have a music ministry, S.S. ministry, youth group ministry, missions ministry, benevolent ministry, nursery ministry, children's ministries, etc. We have something like 6-10 ministries, Pastor." The answer to the second question would sound like, "We have one minister!"

Now in this presupposition of "every member must be involved in a ministry," which word receives too much emphasis? Be careful how you answer. It is not the word "every!" The answer is the word "a." If we believe that every member must be involved in a ministry then we need enough ministries to incorporate all the members. I believe this is the vicious cycle that drives and wastes valuable dollars and time in most evangelical churches that have ministries to every conceivable situation under the sun.

But not only does it waste valuable time and money, it turns the church on its head. By leaving everything in ministry to the paid and trained professionals, it turns the body into passive consumers instead of active participants.

Here, rather, is my presupposition: Every member must be involved in ministry!

1. How many ministries does the church have?
Answer: One!

2. How many ministers does the church have?
Answer: however many saints it has!

We at LBC have one ministry and roughly 150 ministers. My question of each of you is this: Do you feel the call to full-time Christian ministry? Now, if you hear that question with the ears of the traditional institutionalized evangelical church in America then you hear me asking whether or not you feel the call to quit your job and go off to seminary to become a pastor; or whether you feel the call to sell your house and go to Africa as a missionary. That is not my question. I begin with the assumption that every one of you as saints of the Most High God are called to full-time ministry.

- What do I mean by "full-time"?
- What do I mean by "ministry"?

The Calling

Let's begin with v.1 and walk our way through to v.11. We will find that v.11 is a conclusion for Paul's argument and therefore the presupposition for this sermon.

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called

Do you see the word "urge"? Paul is appealing to the reader, calling on you to live a certain way, to walk a certain way. This lifestyle appeal comes with the word "walk." Walk is used figuratively for a way of life. Paul is appealing to the Ephesian Christians to live a certain kind of lifestyle. Paul is appealing to you and me to live a certain way that is appropriate for the calling you received. What calling? I take it to mean the effectual call of God that turned you from darkness to light. You and I are to live a lifestyle that is fitting of salvation. We may not live in a way that contradicts the call of salvation.

Paul goes on to describe the manner in which we live – this is what it looks like:

² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

But do you see the call upon your lifestyle? The Christian way of life is a way of life that "maintains the unity of the Spirit." Do you see that in v.3? Christians live in such a way that it is clearly evident they desire to maintain the unity of the Spirit. I want you to see the connection down in v. 13. Begin with v.11

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the

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Every Member Ministering, Part 1
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evangelists, the pastors and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,

We are called to maintain the unity of the Spirit in v.3 and we are to be equipped for the ministry of bringing each other to the unity of the faith. It is a lifestyle call in v. 3 – live like this, walk like this. It is a call to ministry in vv.11-13. When we connect the dots of Paul’s argument we are left with the assumption that ***every member of Christ’s body is called to a lifestyle of ministry.***

The ministry seeks to “maintain the unity of the Spirit” by bringing every other member of the body into a “unity of faith” that comes from the “knowledge of the Son of God.” In this way, you are called to a full-time ministry in that ministry is to be a way of life. In other words, your vocation exists only to sustain you and support you in your one true calling – ministering to others.

If your identity is wrapped up in your job, your lifestyle is not fitting your call to salvation. The call to salvation calls people in need of change and charges them to help other people in need of change. The model that Christ has designed for his church, according to

Paul Tripp, follows an “all of my people, all of the time” approach¹. If your life is not consumed with ministering to the needs of others, your lifestyle is not in a manner worthy of your call. You are first and foremost a Christian minister before you are an engineer, carpenter, farmer, accountant, laborer, etc.

Right about here, I sense the potential for a major objection: “But Pastor, I am so inadequate for helping others.” Paul knows that the tendency will be for us to cry out like Moses, “But I stutter. Send Aaron!” So your reaction is prone to be, “But I don’t know what to say in ministering to others. Call Pastor!” My response is, “Hold on! Don’t tell God he doesn’t know what he is doing by calling all of his people all of the time to do the work of ministry.” ***You have everything you need to be used by God as an instrument of change in the life of someone else!***

We will take a closer look at Ephesians 4 next week so as to demonstrate the gifting God provides to each believer so that he or she can be a full-time minister.

¹ Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hand*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002. pixy

Corporate Arsenal Passages

God is Faithful to All His Promises

Promise 30: The Lord will keep you from spiritual harm

Psalm 91:9-10

Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge— [10] no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

