

From Entitlement to Ministry

Last week we began talking about the corporate disciplines of worship and connection and noted that every core member of the church should be busy encouraging others to worship and to connect—not just attend services or Sunday School, but to enter into God’s presence and develop authentic relationships with God’s people. We noted that we couldn’t accomplish that without the previous disciplines we’ve discussed. No one can worship God with unconfessed sin in their lives and no one can have authentic relationships and be real with others if they haven’t invited God into their sorrow.

We also discussed that the spiritual disciplines can become the tools encouragers use to encourage other people to grow in their relationship with God and one another.

This week we will underscore the importance of service. It is an important part of encouraging spiritual growth in ourselves and others.

*In the book I said: “Whether a ministry is large or small, it meets a need, fulfills your calling and brings glory to God—and that’s no small thing.”

p. 167

Don’t focus on how large the ministry is—there are no unimportant ministries in God’s kingdom. The important thing is to be involved in ministry.

As beneficiaries of grace it is easy for us to begin to think that it is about us, but it isn’t. It isn’t just about us, but we must take the grace we’ve received and give it to others.

*We’ve got to move the slider over from entitlement to ministry.

Here’s what I mean by ministry:

*Ministry is participating with God and cooperating with His people in serving others to meet their needs, fulfill our calling and bring glory to God.

* participating with God

1 Corinthians 3:9 (HCSB) “For we are God’s co-workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.”

* 1 Thessalonians 3:2 (HCSB) “And we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s co-worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith,”

* Acts 21:19 (HCSB) “After greeting them, he related one by one what God did among the Gentiles through his ministry.”

What does it mean to participate with God? Is it Blackaby’s insight of “seeing God at work and joining him” Is it being missional?

*cooperating with His people

Acts 6:1; 4 (HCSB) “In those days, as the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. [4] But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry.”

* Ephesians 4:12 (HCSB) “for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,”

* Acts 1:17 (HCSB) “For he was one of our number and was allotted a share in this ministry.”

What does it mean to participate with his people - is the local congregation, does parachurch qualify?

Three Models For Lay Ministry			
	Watch Model	Help Model	Be Model
Who Ministers?	Preacher	Overworked few	Everyone
Obligation	Watch and Pay	Sacrifice and Serve	Minister as Gifted
Competition	Preacher vs. Preacher	People vs. People	Church vs. Satan
Burn Out potential	Preacher	People	

Table 1 --Lay Ministry Models

Watch

*Help

*Be

*in serving others

Believers

2 Corinthians 8:4 (HCSB) “they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints,”

*Non-believers

Romans 11:13 (HCSB) “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. In view of the fact that I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,”

*God

Matthew 25:40-45 (HCSB) “‘And the King will answer them, ‘I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’ [41] Then He will also say to those on the left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels! [42] For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink; [43] I was a stranger and you didn’t take Me in; I was naked and you didn’t clothe Me, sick and in prison and you didn’t take care of Me.’ [44] “Then they too will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help You?’ [45] ‘Then He will answer them, ‘I assure you: Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me either.’”

*to meet needs

2 Corinthians 9:12 (HCSB) “For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God.”

Which needs? Felt needs, physical needs, spiritual needs?

*fulfill our calling

Acts 20:24 “But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.”

*Colossians 4:17 (HCSB) “And tell Archippus, ‘Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it.’”

*2 Timothy 4:5 (HCSB) “But as for you, keep a clear head about everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

*1 Timothy 1:12 (HCSB) “I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry”

What is our calling? Individual calling as "ministers" or the calling on all of us to live lives worthy of the gospel (Good news that God is here according to Isaiah and demonstrated by Jesus)

*Leah’s story—

Begin reading p. 208 with “community, at its core...” on the bottom of the page until the section ends on p. 214.

*Living like Jesus lived.

*Intimacy with the father

*Focused on life mission

*Attitude of Hope

*Connected with God and His people

*Serving others and bringing glory to God

*Open yourself up to God’s work of transforming you into the image of Christ—do more than read a book or attend a study—intentionally begin to practice these spiritual disciplines we’ve studied. They are small things, but God can do something big with them.