

It is unfortunate that for many, "the ministry" is viewed as a profession and refers to a few individuals who serve in a faith-based work vocationally. The Biblical concept is broader, and whether or not one is paid is irrelevant when it comes to the true meaning of the term. Trusting Christ as savior, and following him, infuses life with purpose now as well as hope for eternity.

I. The work of "ministry" is **SERVICE**, see also Matthew 20:25-28.

A. This is the meaning of the word translated "ministry" from which we derive the word "**DEACON**".

B. "Service" is a general term but involves different kinds of **WORK**.

C. It is also a necessary **SPIRIT** or **ATTITUDE** required in God's kingdom.

II. The work of ministry is **RECEIVED** from the Lord, see also Acts 9:1-16.

A. It is a particular work for a specific **BELIEVER**.

B. The call or commission comes from **GOD**, not merely man.

C. The indication is that God has a **SERVICE** plan for each believer. (See Ephesians 4:7-16).

III. The work of ministry is to continue until **COMPLETED**, see also 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

A. Staying with it through completion requires **ATTENTION**.

B. There is a time when a particular service God has for you will be **FULFILLED**.

If you are a believer then you should automatically recognize you have been called to ministry in the name of Jesus. From general statements of "mission" given broadly to disciples (such as Matthew 28:19-20) to more specific assignments, service for Christ is simply a part of being a follower of Christ. One of the great lessons of Colossians is the preeminent nature of Jesus Christ, and one clear application is that he is absolutely worthy of our faithful service, continued to completion.

Family Time:

Talk about different ways individual members of your family can serve Jesus. Then, brainstorm some service you might do together “in Jesus’ name”, plan and execute that service as a family.

For Further Study, Thought, and Discussion:

1. What do you think of when you think of “ministers” or “the ministry”? Based on a biblical understanding of ministry as “service”, is there anything that you should change in the way you think about who serves Christ as a “minister”, and how?

2. Read the following passages related to the apostle Peter: John 1:40-42; Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 22:31-34; John 21:15-19; Acts 2:1-14.

--At what point does it seem Jesus had a plan and purpose for Peter’s life?

--What did Jesus know about Peter’s faith journey, in addition to a plan for his future service?

--How did Peter’s experiences, including his failures, contribute to his equipping for service (you might consider his closing words of his second letter, 2 Peter 3:14-18).

--What power was necessary for Peter’s effective service?

--Do you think Jesus’ call for Peter to serve in a particular way was unique to Peter, or does Jesus have a plan and purpose for every believer as it relates to service?

3. Who first learned of God’s purpose for Paul’s life, as recorded in Acts 9:1-16? To whom was the call to the “first missionary journey” revealed in Acts 13:1-3? What do you think the role of the church, the local body of Christ is in revealing his plan and purpose for the individual believer’s life? How does this happen (or does it) in the contemporary church as it relates to specific service for Christ?

4. When is ministry “completed”? As you think about the first followers of Jesus (Peter, John, Paul, etc.) how did the form of their service change as time went on? How has your service for Christ changed through the years, as you encounter new life situations and opportunities? What is before you now in the way of service?

NEXT WEEK: “Return to Rest, My Soul!” Psalm 116

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