

Our Ministry, His Ministry

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The Lay People

Each called to be ministers

How do we minister?

Does it have to fit a program or be in a neat little box? I don't remember where in the Bible it says that ministry is only ministry if it is part of an organization, or a 501 c 3. God never said He required a title for my ministry...preferably a big, important-sounding one. No – it is WE who want those things.

Now there *are* important ways of ministering corporately, of gathering together in community to do God's work. Church attendance and involvement, giving, volunteerism, even our Impossible Dreams focus are examples. Those are ministries that, really, we should all be participating in somewhere. But those are also all things most of us do *on the side*. They may be our favorite things, but they are like our extracurricular activities.

So here is my question for you: what is YOUR LIFE's ministry? Your calling, your identity? I'm not talking about the sum of your extra-curriculars. I'm talking about the actual curriculum.

My guess is that most of us sitting here don't know our calling or our true identity. And my further guess is that we miss knowing that. What's one of the first questions we ask someone we've met? "What do you DO? WHERE do you work?" We feel we're slacking without it. And so it's the same with our ministry calling. We WANT to know. We WANT a tangible identity that attaches us to God. We want to be able to say, "THIS is the purpose of my life. THIS is what I was meant to do." The good news is that God knows, and He wants to tell us.

But so often we forget to ask HIM. Instead we search on our own. We look for what fits. What feels good – to us. We try to decide where to get plugged in. What extra-curriculars might scratch that itch.

And the messages we get from our society about what is valuable can make it even harder to hear God. Easy to fall into traps:

- 1) One ministry better than another. Ex: Bill's role or mission field
- 2) Voice that says the answer is to DO MORE. RACK UP POINTS!! GET AHEAD!!

But WHOSE ministry IS this, anyway? This is not MY ministry. This is HIS. HE calls the plays. HE assigns the roles. It's not the running back's team; it's the coach's. It's not the private's army; it's the general's. It's not the running back's responsibility to call the plays, or the private's problem to come up with the strategy. Likewise, the responsibility for how I will do God's work was not meant to be my burden to bear. And trying to take that on ourselves will always lead to a feeling of futility.

A Mighty Fortress v. 2 Our strength will not win the day. HIS WILL. But we do have a part to play – an important one. **ICor 12 (gifts)** We're supposed to play our role. And without each member of the squad playing his or her part, there are gaps. Those gaps can be devastating to the overall effort. Each person has a critical role to fill...you and I. There IS a master plan...the MASTER'S plan!

So, how **do** we find out from Him? Well, we need to start by being willing (okay with not having headline-grabbing roles...offensive lineman) to do whatever is asked.

Then we need to prepare ourselves to see EVERYTHING through our "theology".

Then...ASK HIM. (Prayerlessness P.T. Forsyth...JESUS) Seek to learn more about how He has equipped you. Do you already have a handle on what your spiritual gifts are? If not, ask Him; ask your spouse or friends to confirm.

Ask Him what HE is calling you to do TODAY. If He tells you to pick up and move, well, then okay.

But hear this: until further notice from God Himself, our ministry is to be played out where WE ARE. With the gifts we HAVE. **I Cor 7:24 (remain where called) Rev 3:8 (open door)** Are we supposed to grow closer to God and develop those gifts? YES. Might He possibly expand our gifts or add to them for His purposes? Absolutely. But the game is going on RIGHT NOW. God has assigned us each our roles, and we are IN them RIGHT NOW.

So here, I think, are some places to examine as you let God show you your ministry.

Part 1: Look at what you are already doing and consider how God might be using it. What stirs you? What are you good at? What do you find yourself giving? How might you already be playing your role and you didn't even know it? Examples. **KB – counseling, listening, serving, modeling...building things, fixing things, Serving, counseling, presence, etc.** Your task now? Simple. Start SEEING it as ministry. See it for what God intended it to be!!! IT IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT! IT IS NOT SMALL! IT DOES NOT NEED A TITLE!! CAN GOD USE IT? IS HE IN IT? Then thank God for it! And approach it with fresh passion!! Find out how you can maximize it!!

Part 2: Look at your work and see where you have disconnected ministry from your work. Your work IS one of your most vital ministries! How can you minister through your work? Doesn't mean covert Bible meetings and making sure everyone hears you talking about Jesus. What it does mean is that you see everything you do as belonging to God. If your work is not going to be God's, then you are saying that most of your waking hours are not in partnership with God, working for Him. That's not what we want.

Part 3: Ministry at HOME (Biblical example of what happens in absence)

John 15: 4-5

May we abide in Him.

May we look to HIM for our identity.

May we be ministers...HIS ministers.

May we find fullness and satisfaction in doing HIS ministry.

It's YOUR ministry!!!! This is YOUR role!!!!