

LIVING



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WEEK NINE Finding Your Place in Ministry

THE MISSIONARY TASK

Component Four: *Healthy Church Formation*

INTRODUCTION

As you coach a new believer towards the area of service, it is important to emphasize that every believer has both the opportunity and the accountability to be engaged in serving God in some way. The magnitude and the scope of a person's ministry are not the central issues.

The primary purpose of servanthood is to glorify God by pointing other people to Him.

This may occur very directly through evangelism, preaching, singing or it may take place in an extremely supportive manner through handing out bulletins, cleaning toilets, or diapering babies in the church nursery.

BIBLICAL MATERIAL

The Bible gives us example after example of people doing work for the Lord. Many who served go unnamed and in many cases the details of what they have done go untold. In the letter to the Romans, we find a highly sophisticated theology of the Christian faith, but before Paul closes the letter, he takes chapter sixteen to acknowledge over twenty-five men and women who served God along with him. Ephesians 4:11-13, gives us insight into the way the church is to prepare people for service and the outcome of that service:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The leadership of the church is to invest itself in equipping the saints—that is all of us—for the work of ministry and through this God builds up the body of Christ: the church. Along with the maturity of the church comes the maturing of the individual believer in Christlikeness.

When we consider the task of helping a new believer find a place of ministry, we should always keep in mind this biblical goal. We are not simply helping the church fill a slot in the list of workers; nor are we finding a job for someone to help him or her feel they have a prestigious role in the congregation. We are helping a person find a place of service that will enable that person to glorify God and grow in Christlikeness through that service.

MISSIONARY TASK RELEVANCY

Helping believers to serve and to find a place of service is a part of the missionary task. Healthy churches are those churches which build up the body through equipping the believers to effectively serve in the work of the church and the kingdom of God. So how do we activate people? First, we teach accountability. We make it as clear as possible to every person who is a part of the body of Christ that they are needed in the work of ministry.

If you are uncertain about whether a certain task or role is for you, you can usually try it out in some modified way. You don't have to agree to be the every-Sunday teacher of third graders; you could probably arrange to visit the class and teach a small part of the lesson one Sunday. That way you could see if it is a good fit. You don't have to commit to a committee assignment. You could ask to visit the committee and learn more about what it does. You don't have to become the full-time church cleaner; you could volunteer to sanitize the toys in the nursery for a month and see if a role in that area would match your willingness to help. In virtually every area of ministry, there is the potential of trying out the role.



This search for roles of ministry is a life-long process rather than a once and forever decision. We are constantly asking God if He has something new or something different for us to do. The starting point is to prayerfully ask God, "Father, what would you like for me to be doing in your kingdom now?" Then do it.

LIFE APPLICATION

1. To what activities are you attracted? Is there something that excites you when you consider the work of the church?
2. What are your gifts? Last week we talked about spiritual gifts. Is God impressing on you that He has provided for you a special ability to lead worship, to teach, to organize ministry, or to bring spiritual healing in the life of people?
3. What are your skills? In addition to spiritual gifts, we may have natural skills that God has implanted in us from birth and that we have further trained and developed.
4. What gives you a sense of joy? Our work within the life of the church does not always directly produce joy, but it is wonderful when it does.
5. What needs are there around you? It is wonderful when we can feel spiritually or emotionally fulfilled by our work in the life of the church, but sometimes there is work which simply needs doing.