

Philosophy of Ministry

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To define a philosophy of ministry, I believe that I must first define ministry and its very purpose. Ministry is the act of man fulfilling the purpose for which God had placed him on the earth. While we may often think of ministry as a pastor preaching on Sunday, a missionary or evangelist reaching to the lost or simply meeting a spiritual need of another, we can not limit our definition of ministry. Ministry is, in fact, the embodiment of our purpose for being here. God has called each of us to minister. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us that we are in fact a royal priesthood that we may show the excellence of Him who called us out of darkness. The priesthood no longer is limited to those only who serve a special function, but rather it is the responsibility of all of us to show God's excellence. We have all been called to minister in the world today.

So what is our purpose for being here. The Westminster shorter catechism teaches that the chief end of man is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." I am in agreement with statement and find it biblically sound.

"I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Isaiah 43:6 - 7

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to this end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."

Ephesians 1:11 - 12

"Whether, then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

I Corinthians 10:31

Now if our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever and ministry is the embodiment of the purpose to which we have all been called in our different walks of life, how then do we go about doing ministry. What are the characteristics of it and what does it look like.

This is the essence of a philosophy of ministry.

The purpose of ministry is to bring glory to God. All the actions, all the goals, all the plans; each of these are meaningless if they do not glorify God.

The end goal of ministry is to see that peoples lives are changed and that they are drawn closer to God so they may enjoy him forever. But how does a ministry glorify God in its actions. I believe that it is a three-fold mission.

A. The first step in glorifying God is building up the church.

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelist, and some as pastors and teachers, for equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11 - 12

The Church serves as Christ presence on the earth. It is the church who has been charged with this very mission. It is the church that the world looks to as the example of what it means to be a Christian. It is the church that reaches out to the lost. Building up the church brings glory to God. It achieves this through the ministries of teaching, training and providing opportunities. We are called to teach the body the truths of scripture. We are called to train the body to use the gifts the lord has given them in service. We are called to provide opportunities for the body to exercise their gifts. Through the ministry of teaching, training and providing opportunities we build the up the body to bring glory to God through their service.

b. The second step in glorifying God is engaging the world.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the peck measure, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Engaging the world is meeting it where it is. We cannot expect the world to come to us. We cannot expect the world to speak our language. Rather, we need to reach out to the world and engage them in their realm. This is exactly what Paul did in Athens in Acts 17. He did not simply start telling them the truth of God, rather he approached by discussing their temple and the alter to the unknown God. It is then through this that he engaged them in conversation and used it as a spring board to share the truth. But engagement is not limited to speaking, it is also in meeting the needs of others. When Jesus fed the 5,000 in Mark 6 he did not simply speak to the people, but he was moved with compassion for them and met their physical need. Through meeting peoples needs and meeting them where they are we engage the culture and bring glory to God.

C. The third step in glorifying God is reaching the lost.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19 - 20

God’s desire is for all to come to repentance as is stated in 2 Peter 3:9. He has commanded us to reach out to the lost. We are to bring the gospel to a lost and dying world and bring them to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Some might argue that evangelism is the primary purpose of the church, but Romans 10:14 - 15 show us how this is a single, though integral, part of the three-fold mission of the church in fulfilling its purpose. They cannot believe unless they hear (reaching the lost), they can not hear with out a preacher (engaging the culture) and they can not preach unless they are sent (building up the body). The purpose of the church is to glorify God, and this is done through building up the body, engaging the culture and reaching the lost.