**Ministries in Church**

***6****In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.****2****So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.****3****Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them****4****and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”*

***5****This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.****6****They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.****7****So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:1-7, ESV)*

God has given each person a ministry through which the church can prosper. Greetings in the Lord as we continue this week to talk about our thoughts regarding ministry. Church ministry has always been a primary expression of our faith. The term ministry or service comes from the Greek word “Diakonia,” which means both a position of service and a helping act, or act of service, depending on how it is used. Today we are going to attempt to clarify the meaning of service based on our Scripture reading as well as to find what the demand of Scripture is from us as God’s children called to ministry. Yes, it is true that each of us is called to be helpful in a specific way to others in this world – but how that works is a question that we hope to answer in this message. Again, every person has a ministry which is geared to cause the church to grow in some way. Our goal is to tackle just how that is…

A believer’s ministry happens according to the God-given leadership of the church, always giving priority to the ministries of the Word of God and prayer. For any ministry, the servant needs to have the gift or skill to accomplish the task given. Whether out in the world or in church, God has not called every person to every ministry, at all times. There are priority ministries, which should always be happening, and there are ministries that are different than those primary ministries.

According to the Scripture passage, the practical mercy ministry of the church was not functioning well because its oversight was left up to the apostles. However, the latter knew very well that their calling was to continue in the prayer and “Word” ministries. Yes, they could have participated in the food and mercy ministries, but not everyone had their unique experiences and had received an education from Jesus himself. If they had gotten busy with table-ministry, then they would have been unfaithful to the original ministry to which they had been called. Therefore, though they delegated the task, they did not want just “anybody” in the needed ministry, but commanded devoted church brothers to be found to oversee the mercy/table ministry. All seven that were chosen were presented as those with a good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Stephen and Philipp would later have unique roles in the early church’s ministry.

In other words, even if someone is functioning in a unique ministry and can take on another ministry, they must think about which service is priority in their case. The Apostles very clearly knew what their role was – which is why they needed other devoted, spiritual people to oversee that other ministry, which itself was a spiritual undertaking.[[1]](#footnote-1)

For example, imagine for a moment that a preacher suddenly decided that he would be better as the church painter or facilities manager and stopped preaching. Or, think about what would happen if the best cook in the church suddenly decided that they needed to sing, when no one could take their place in the kitchen.

So, what am I saying? Simply that if one of us functions in a ministry which corresponds to our gifts, it is important to continue in that gift (as the Apostles did). Everyone may not have the same ministry, but all church ministries can be done for the glory of God. A believer’s ministry happens according to the God-given leadership of the church, always giving priority to the ministries of the Word of God and prayer. When God gives a ministry in the church, it is important that the right people are established in the right positions. God bless you all. Amen.

1. Contrary to its external presentation as a simple food distribution or money distribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)