

Ministry Together

“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” - Galatians 6:10

Ministry is taking the gifts and resources you’ve received by God’s grace and using them to meet the needs of others in the name of Jesus Christ. Every Christian is called to do works of ministry. Paul writes, “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.” (Ephesians 3:11-13) God calls ‘ministers’ to do ministry, and one aspect of their ministry is to help the “saints” learn to do ministry in the name of Jesus. Ministry is not the work of ‘professionals’, but servants who are being served by the grace of God in Christ.



Those living by faith in Jesus are called to different ministries. We have callings to do ministry in our families, our church, and our community. One of the ministries every church member is called to is a ministry to one another. Every church member is equipped in Jesus Christ to come alongside another to build one another up to maturity in Christ. Every church member has gifts and resources to share in meeting the needs of others within “the household of faith.” Therefore, we need to learn how to minister to one another. We need to learn how to share in one another’s needs in the presence of God with wisdom and prayer. This type of ministry is done by people in need giving their lives, their words, and their prayers to others in need.

One of important principles involved in ministry to one another in the body of Christ is HUMILITY. The church carries out her callings in ministry together “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2) Maturity in Jesus Christ begins with dependence. In humility we depend upon God and others. In church we tend to be independent, self protective, and disjointed. This leads to us trying to deal with our needs in isolation or by turning to the professionals to fix our problems. But God’s goal in ministry is to bring his church to completion in Christ, not to fix the current problems of individual consumers who look to the church for ‘what’s in it for me.’ Ministry is done by people in need of God and others, and for people in need of God and others. Ministry is done in humility. Ministry expressed in humility will bring about the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) that God desires for his church.

Imagine a church culture that is interconnected where people are speaking to one another out of their pain and need and people are responding with compassion and prayer. Imagine a church culture where you can speak with others of your joys and they rejoice with you in thanksgiving. Imagine a church culture where you can share your struggles with sin, and you are understood, encouraged, and offered hope with the truth and grace of the gospel as another person speaks the truth in love, and prays with you according to God’s word. Imagine a church culture where someone walks with you through pain, sorrow, joy, and struggles so that you find yourself growing in faith, hope, and love. This is the expression of a church ministering to one another in humility.

A church culture that is humbled by grace gives grace in ministry to one another. Ed Welch writes, “As we come to Jesus, he has forgiven and washed us so that we can speak openly without shame, he has loved us so that we can love him and others freely, and he has given us wisdom and power from his Spirit so that we can help each other in ways that build up and give hope. In his honor and in his strength we want to grow into a wonderfully interdependent, wise, loving body of Christ—one in which we can help each other in times of trouble.” (*Caring for One Another*).

Humility in ministry is expressed in the words, “I need Jesus, and I need other people.” (Welch) Humility breathes grace. It inhales the grace of God in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, for being accepted and loved by God as his children, and for struggling with sin until we are made complete in Christ. It exhales the grace of God in Christ to others, like ourselves, who need Jesus and other people. It exhales grace in coming alongside with God’s grace in truth as it is in Jesus Christ expressed in his word and in the way of prayer. Praying for one another with the word of God is our expression of humility. The prayer hearing God hears our cries (Psalm 62:8) and readies himself to meet us in our needs with his grace and mercy (Hebrews 4:16).

Ministry together moves forward in prayer. Our well timed need of help is always knocking at the door. Learn to express your needs to one another. It may be in regard to a sin you’re struggling with, a relationship difficulty, a financial burden, or some present cause of anxiety or despondency. Once the need is expressed then trust that God in his word has something to say about that need. If a persons bills exceed their present means - Matthew 6:11 and 6:25-33, can be prayed through together. If another person is struggling with a relationship with their spouse - Ephesians 5:21-32, can be prayed through. If another person is struggling with sickness in their life - 2Corinthians 1:3-7 or 12:9-10. In humility you are learning to connect the truth God, his promises, his grace, his mercy, and his will, to the needs. In this way you and the other person are crying out to God trusting in him to grow you into maturity in Christ through the needs. You will be helping the other person see the connection between their need and God’s word, and how God uses his word to God, their Savior and Lord, to them in their time of need. In ministry together in humility you are helping people run to God, and to God through others.

Life Together

In the coming months our Growth Groups will be focusing on learning to do ministry together like I have described above. They will be reading and discussing together Ed Welch’s book, *Caring for One Another, 8 Ways to Cultivate Meaningful Relationships*. If you are not a part of a Growth Group but are interested you can sign up at church or call the church office. Growth Groups meet twice a month.

Worship Together

How do you move worship from your lips forward...to your heart forward? Jesus, in recounting the words of the prophet, says concerning the Jews of his day, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me,” (Matthew 15:8, 9a). A people who worships God from their lips have their hearts set on other gods. When we worship God by singing a song, following along with a prayer or a reading, or listening to a sermon, but our hearts are not directed to God in a life of loving faith and repentance and trust, then we worship from the lips forward. When we gather for worship with others and we find nothing in the relationships, music, or sermon for ourselves, and depart indifferent, critical, and judgmental, then we are worshipping from the lips forward. When we worship from the lips forward we worship in vain. It will leave us with the gods we really worship and in the misery they deliver.

Worshipping from the heart forward requires a change in our loves. A rational cognitive switch cannot be flipped to make us worshipers from the heart. A change in scenery, style, or people cannot make us worshipers from the heart. A radical heart surgery affecting our desires, our wants, our loves has to occur. This is act and work of God. God must act upon us in the person and work of Jesus Christ so that we see him shining brightly in our faces. This is when all the other gods who have our hearts fade into the darkness in the light of his glory. It is the Spirit’s work to glorify Jesus to us. He works toward us in means he has chosen to reveal his glory and make our other gods look ridiculous. Our god of comfort becomes nothing when the God of all comfort comforts us in our union with Jesus Christ, even when we are suffering. Our god peace becomes nothing when the Prince of Peace reveals himself making peace with us and God, ourselves, and the world of people we live among, by his righteousness through faith. Our gods of power and prestige through possessions fades into the shadows when we see the power of God revealed in the weakness of the cross where we have died with Christ to death, and live forevermore in his resurrection power with the hope of glory. It is the acts of God for us in Christ, and the work of God toward us by the Spirit through his prayers, words, and sacraments to make him the object of our hearts affections that moves our worship from our lips to our hearts. He acts and works to shape our loves. Therefore, we must gather together with the people in the place where he is doing this work displaying his acts. It is here our hearts are shaped for faith, repentance, trust, love, and a willing life saying, ‘command me as you will.’