

Your Ministry

Lesson #4

Ministry

Scripture: Romans 12:6-8

Juniata Baptist Sunday School

The second gift mentioned in Romans 12 is the function of “ministry” in the Body of Christ. Those whose gift is ministry are told to “wait on . . . [their] ministering.” The Greek word translated “ministry” and “ministering” in this passage is *diakonia*, a very common word for service in the New Testament. This and related words are often translated with a form of the English word “minister” in the King James Bible. Look up the following verses for examples of this: Matthew 20:28, Acts 6:1, Romans 15:25, II Corinthians 9:1, Hebrews 6:10, I Peter 4:11. In other places, words related to this word are translated with forms of the word “serve.” Look up these verses to find examples of this: Luke 22:27, John 12:26, Acts 6:2, Romans 16:1, Revelation 2:19. The meaning of *diakonia* is serving in the sense of attending to needs. Ministry in the Bible does not necessarily involve preaching. It is more a matter of helping. It means serving others by meeting needs. Everybody who is a Christian should minister to others, but some in the church are gifted to specialize in ministry.

1. Examples.

What is ministry? The first book of the New Testament gives us three tremendous examples of this activity.

A. Angels (Matthew 4:11)

“Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

We read early in the Book of Matthew that angels ministered to Jesus after He was tempted by the devil. If you remember the story (in Matthew 4:1-10), you realize that our Lord had undergone a great physical, psychological, and spiritual trial. The angels came to help Christ recover. That’s ministry: meeting needs.

B. A Mother (Matthew 8:15)

“And he touched her hand, and the fever

left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.”

When Jesus healed Peter’s wife’s mother, she used her renewed strength to minister. She worked to meet the immediate needs of the Lord and His disciples. Perhaps she prepared a meal for them to eat, or drew water for them to drink. That’s ministry: meeting needs.

C. Christ (Matthew 20:28)

“. . . the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

The Lord Jesus Christ provided for us the greatest example of ministry. He went about doing good, meeting the needs of people around Him. He even gave His own life in order to meet our need of salvation.

2. Christianity.

Really, ministering to others is a fundamental aspect of the Christian life. Serving is part of being Christ-like.

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)

As with the other function gifts of Romans 12, the gift of ministry is a specialization in a certain activity that all Christians are called to do. We should all minister, but some are especially gifted to work at meeting needs. In a sense, all the gifts are forms of ministry (Note Romans 12:13 and Ephesians 4:12). The gift of ministry, however, is given to some whose main activity within the Body of Christ is to do things that meet needs.

3. Forms.

What forms does ministry take?

A. Supplying material needs.

“...ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. . .I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.” (I Corinthians 16:15 and 17)

What can you do to supply the material needs of the church? Fix broken things? Buy certain supplies? Build something? Thank the Lord, some are gifted and motivated to do such things.

B. Running errands.

“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith. . .” (I Thessalonians 3:1-2)

Paul couldn't go, and so he sent Timothy. It's amazing how many more things can be done when there are people to help the preacher. Actually anybody's work will be much more effective if others help him—the Sunday School teacher, the Nursery Director, the Youth Director, anybody! Ministry, meeting needs, isn't usually glamorous, but it is powerfully helpful.

C. Doing things to alleviate poverty.

“...Susanna, and many other. . .ministered unto him of their substance.” (Luke 8:3)

What can women do in the church? They cannot preach to mixed congregations, according to I Timothy 2:11-12. But they can do many things that call for the gift of ministry. Romans 16 mentions several Christian ladies whose service helped the churches. Meals prepared for the needy, work done for the sick, and clothing made for the poor are all forms of ministry. Men were also involved in ministering to the poor in the First-Century church. Acts 6 tells us about the men appointed to feed the widows of the Jerusalem church. The office they represented was later called deacon, a name that comes from *diakonia*, the Greek word for ministry we've been studying.

Has God called you to exercise the gift of ministry in our church? Has He blessed you with an ability that can meet certain needs of the church, of the poor, of individuals in the church? You don't have to be a preacher to be a minister!