

**Intro:**

I want to continue our series on Our Church today. This is a series of messages we have been working on ‘off and on’ regarding how we conduct our ministry and what we want our church to be.

We have covered these subjects:

1. Our Church under Christ, our head
2. Our Church administered by Pastor-led congregational government
3. Our Church focused on the Word of God
4. Our Church life conducted in a reverent atmosphere
5. Our Church mission of evangelism

Today we are going to consider the topic:

*Our Church, Your Ministry*

This could be sub-titled by something that is a bit of a ‘buzz-word’:

*every member ministry*

That ‘buzz-word’ may seem a bit pretentious sounding – you might conjure up a bureaucratic empire where every individual in an organization has an ‘official’ title: “First Assistant to the Head of Pencil Sharpener” or some such...

That isn’t what we mean.

What we are after in church ministry is something that I have described in past messages as a “body”. We want our local church to be a body that is interconnected with one another and actively serving one another. This results in ‘every member ministry.’”

Can I use another buzzword? “Taking ownership” — what does that mean?

In the corporate world, it means that employees are somehow to buy into the notion that their responsibilities are almost their own small business within a larger corporate structure.

In the church, that means that the members of the church see the church as their responsibility and they look for ways to be a blessing and a help to one another.

Before we get into our passages, I’d like to read the Mount Calvary statement on this point:

We believe in every-member ministry and accountability (Heb. 10:25; Eph 4.11-13; 1 Cor. 16:2).

Our aim is for the whole body to be fitted and held together so that by the proper working of each individual part, the body grows and builds up itself in love.

The statement itself may seem a bit dry... I think we can bring it to life by looking at the passages they cite in support and adding one other.

Heb 10:24-25; Eph 4.11-13; 1 Cor. 16:2; Jn 13.34-35

**Proposition:** Every member ministry happens when church members voluntarily enter into the covenant spirit the Lord intended for the local church.

## I. Ministry is accomplished by a sum of the parts

The first point of this message is to call you to consider the ‘particulars’ in each passage we are looking at.

### A. The ministry of provocation (Heb 10.24-25)

#### 1. Consider = to intensely consider

“‘To direct one’s whole mind to an object,’ also from a higher standpoint to immerse oneself in it and hence to apprehend it in its whole compass.”<sup>1</sup>

2. One another – one of the ‘body life’ passages in the Bible, very important and worth studying this phrase all by itself
3. Purpose: to provoke ‘stir up, incite’ unto love and good works

Gk word for ‘provoke’ give us English ‘paroxysm’ – ‘a fit’; ‘a sudden violent emotion or action’

#### 4. Context:

- a. Regular assembly together in church
- b. Personal exhortation of one another
- c. With the coming of the Day of the Lord in mind

### B. The ministry of edification [soul-building] (Eph 4.11-13)

1. Gifted men (11)
2. Given to equip saints (12a)

<sup>1</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed., 4:973 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976).

3. So saints can work and build (12b and 12c)
4. With the goal of all of us becoming just like Christ (13)

See also v. 16: ‘fitly joined together’, ‘effectual working in the measure of every part’, etc.

#### C. The ministry of sacrificial giving (1 Cor 16.2)

1. We don’t have the idea of giving to the needs of the local church in view in this passage
2. This offering Paul was collecting was for saints in need in Jerusalem, a true sacrificial ministry
  - a. If you give, for example, to the ministry of our church, you give to something you will derive a direct benefit from (and this is still needed!)
  - b. But here, the idea is a sacrificial gift to saints from whom you are unlikely to gain a direct benefit
    - 1) Missions giving
    - 2) Church planting giving
    - 3) Crisis giving (for saints elsewhere suddenly in a crisis)

#### D. The key to this ministry (Jn 13.34-35)

1. It is Christ’s ‘new commandment’ (something of a watchword for the apostle John, see 1 Jn)
2. It is the means by which the world discerns your discipleship (more on this later)

## II. Ministry is engaged by the love of the saints

One book I have on my self that is in my ‘reading list’ is one called *The Deliberate Church*. My reading list is a list of books that I am ‘reading’. That is, I have started all of them and sometimes am coming back to some of them.

This book is the expression of the ministry philosophy of a pastor in Washington, DC. I have some differences of opinion with this pastor in some areas and some differences of theology in others.

But on this point, I think we are really in agreement. We are after the same kind of thing in church life. He gives us “Five Aspects of the Culture of Love in the Local Church”:

- It is Covenantal
- It is Careful
- It is Corporate
- It is Cross-cultural
- It is Cross-generational

A. The notion of covenantal love in the life of the local church

1. Covenant is a pact that is stronger than a contract, where the parties commit to fulfill their covenant in spite of the failures of the other parties
2. If you have bought into the church as a Body, as your Body, your ministry, you will display this kind of commitment to *one another*.
  - a. Bearing burdens
  - b. Sharing joys
  - c. Giving to support the local ministry
  - d. Exercising affectionate watchfulness over one another
  - e. Rebuking error or receiving rebuke for error

Some churches have an official church covenant document that individuals are asked to sign and commit to in order to be members. It includes items like these.

Whether we have an official covenant or not (we don't), church members should be committed to this kind of care for one another.

B. The notion of carefulness in the life of the local church (summed up by the word 'consider' in Heb 10.24 above)

“‘To direct one’s whole mind to an object,’ also from a higher standpoint to immerse oneself in it and hence to apprehend it in its whole compass.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed., 4:973 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976).

C. The notion of ‘corporateness’ in the life of the local church

“We want to make sure that we encourage people to place a high priority on the corporate life of the congregation, not simply on their own individual walks with the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

1. Not “feed me, feed me, feed me” (mark of immaturity)
2. But “what can I give to someone else”

Note: some churches don’t feed their people anything, or precious little – we aren’t talking about staying in a church like that!

But in a Bible-preaching church, it is assumed you are being fed. You need much more than your own needs being met, however!

D. The notion of a cross-cultural ministry in the local church

1. “The local church is for everyone.”<sup>4</sup>
2. Not just people in my comfort zone
  - a. Racial
  - b. Social
  - c. Economic

E. The notion of a cross-generational ministry in the local church

1. Church as family
2. All families have their own family life and individual ‘styles’ and responsibilities
3. But in church, we all have an interest in one another, whether it be the little children, the teens, the young adults, the middle aged, the seniors – we should have time for one another

How is this accomplished?

<sup>KJV</sup> **Eph 4:15** But speaking the truth in love,

<sup>KJV</sup> **Eph 4:16** ... unto the edifying of itself in love.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Heb 10:24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love

<sup>3</sup> Mark Dever, *The Deliberate Church*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>4</sup> Dever, 111.

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<sup>KJV</sup> **Joh 13:34** A new commandment I give unto you,  
That ye love one another

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And what was the offering for the saints of Jerusalem but a gift of love?

### **III. Ministry is displayed distinctly to an unbelieving world (Jn 13.35)**

Very briefly now...

- A. Evangelism is only as effective as the local church is a body
  - 1. We are not looking for “another notch on the gospel gun” (Debbi)
  - 2. We are looking for a true testimony of the life of Christ to the world
- B. Your ministry in the body is to love one another
  - 1. You may do little things or big things in the church, it doesn't matter what
  - 2. You do it not for yourself, but for others
  - 3. Your ministry for others should be evident as we all encourage others to come in and visit the assembly
  - 4. Others-oriented ministry speaks volumes to a watching world – no where in the world is really like that

### **Conclusion:**

Our evangelism is not very systematic. I would like to be more systematic in our approach.

But can we systematically approach ministry this way? Can we work at making our church life our social life such that we live for and love one another and invite our lost friends and neighbours into that circle of friendship and gospel love?