

Ministry (Service)

Ministry means the community of believers' loving service to each other and the world. We display God's character when we love others, and especially our enemies. We also, hopefully, truly help unbelievers and bring them one step closer to a relationship with God. This service can take many forms including physical, financial, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. The Church is supposed to be salt and light in the world, and this is a main way of carrying out that command.

Assessment statements with related verses and questions for further study ◆————◆

a. I have a growing desire to love others in concrete ways with decreasing self-centeredness.....1 2 3 4 5

Philippians 2: 3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

What is the opposite of humble consideration of others in these verses?

1 John 3: 16-18 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

How can we know we have Christ's love in us?

From these verses, is love an emotion or a decision to act?

b. I am growing in wisdom and can give better advice and guidance to others than in the past.....1 2 3 4 5

Colossians 1:10 *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*

To live a life worthy of the Lord, what needs to be happening to my knowledge of God?

Proverbs 1:5 *A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.*

Why do wise people get wiser?

c. Those closest to me would say my life is a reflection of giving more than receiving.....1 2 3 4 5

Acts 20:35 *In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

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When we are feeling and acting stingily what are we communicating?

d. I am open about my weaknesses and painful experiences and see them as opportunities to minister to others.....1 2 3 4 5

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

How does God want to use our troubles in other people's lives?

2 Corinthians 12: 7-10 *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

How is God's power perfected in our weaknesses?

What is sufficient for us?

e. I regularly reflect on my life to cut out wasteful uses of time, talents, and resources and contribute them to the kingdom of God1 2 3 4 5

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

What kinds of things hinder us so we are less perseverant in the race?

Are these always sins?

Ephesians 5:15-16 *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Why are we commanded to make the most of our time?

f. I am currently serving God in my family and church with the gifts and passions He has given me.....1 2 3 4 5

Romans 12:44 *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

Regardless of what the gift is, what does Paul say we need to do with our God-given giftedness?

What are some unproductive ways we use our giftedness?

g. I also serve God in my community with the gifts and passions He has given me.....1 2 3 4 5

James 2:15-16 *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*

How helpful are kind words without a demonstration of kind actions?

Luke 10:33-35 *"But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.'*

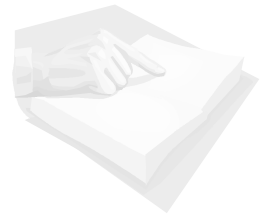
What is the lesson in this passage about being a good neighbor?

Resources

Proverbs—Read One Chapter a Day (There are 31 chapters so this can be a good daily habit to go through the book once a month for a few months)

Don't Waste Your Life—John Piper (A powerful challenge to make the most of the life God has given us)

The Volunteer Revolution— Bill Hybels



Concrete Steps

- Brainstorm ways to start seeing your family and/or job as a vital ministry.
- Commit to serve in some kind of ministry. Or invent a ministry according to your talents and gifts.
- Take on a volunteer project at your church.

My Response...

What was the most meaningful statement of Scripture you read in the section on Ministry?

Reword the statement in a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to the study of Ministry?

My Plan...

1.

2.

General Practices

1. Join a Ministry: Join an existing ministry at your church that best fits your spiritual gifts, interests, passions, talents, abilities, personality type, and experiences.

2. Jump in Anywhere: You discover your gifts by getting involved in ministry. If you don't know your gifts and abilities yet, then just find something that sounds interesting and get involved. You'll never know what you're good at until you get started. If it doesn't work out, call it an "experiment" and try something else. *"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done"* Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT)

3. Start a New Ministry: You may have an idea for a ministry that does not currently exist at your church. Spend some time in prayer to determine if this ministry idea is something you would like to pursue. If it is, then contact your pastor or church leader who is in charge of ministries.