

What is Your Ministry in the Church? Part 1

What is Your Ministry?

Early in ministry, it appeared to me that in many cases ministries in churches were dependant upon the presence of a priest for their existence. As a result, when a priest was transferred to another parish, ministries that he had developed often times ended. What fails to occur is that ministry development may come from a priest, but for it to become an integral part of parish life, parishioners must lead these ministries themselves.

Indeed, St. Paul taught that the mission of the presbyters was to empower the faithful to do specific ministries within the Church and not to be the ones doing everything:

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. (Eph 4:11-12)

The mission of a parish priest is to assist in the development of ministries and to equip church leadership with the tools to bring ministries alive. Parishioners can prayerfully ask God, 'What ministry does God want me to develop and bring to life?' Pray that God may reveal to you what it is that you should be doing in the Church. I have often said, if you see a need that is unmet, ask God how it is that you can meet that need.

Secondly, meditate on the following verses from Romans:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him. For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:1-8)

The following points serve as a foundation to finding one's ministry in the Church.

1. Our lives are meant to be given in SERVICE to God as a living sacrifice. Our life does not belong to us; it belongs to our Lord.
2. Offering our lives in service to God is a form of worshipping God.

3. The love and pursuit of wealth, prosperity, comfort, and luxurious living can hinder one from knowing God's will for us and, consequently, our ministry within the Church. We cannot love God and money at the same time.

For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. (1 Tim 6:10)

4. Competition within the "body of Christ" is against the Gospel. We know that to be the greatest, one must become the servant of all, but a true servant thinks of himself last and everyone else first. This is humility.

5. Find your Ministry! After prayer, fasting, and meditation on the words of Christ you need to ACT!

Paul lists the following ministries:

- Prophecy - discerning God will , for both personal and communal levels
- Service - offering of one's time and talent to the Church
- Teaching - teaching at home, in the parish and to the community
- Exhorting - helping bring back those led astray
- Contributing - offering of one's treasures to sustain ministries
- Giving Aid & Acts of Mercy - helping meet the emotional, physical or spiritual needs of others.

Make an appointment with your parish priest, talk to one another about ideas and perceived needs. Do something- the church is in our hands.

We are told by St. Paul that the early Christians understood the gifts of the Spirit as given for doing ministry within the Church. I pray that you may become as eager as the early Christians were to build up this community and to serve Christ by serving one another.

So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. (1 Cor. 14: 12)

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