

Philosophy of Ministry

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Understanding that the Church is the “pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15) must instill a firm conviction to know what the Scriptures say about church ministry and to implement the guiding principles into the church life and ministry.

A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors through the strength of the Holy Spirit to: (1) exalt God, (2) evangelize the lost, (3) edify believers, (4) expositionally teach, (5) encourage Christlikeness, and (6) equip missionaries. These will be discussed briefly in turn.

1. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to exalt God.

God created all things and all things exist through Him and for Him (Gen 1:1; Ps 24:1; Rom 11:36). Because God made all things it is required of His creatures to extol Him with worship and adoration. This requires that ministry be *God-centered*, or *theocentric*. God and His character exists at the core of everything that is done in the local Church. The announcements, to the Scripture reading, to the preaching, to the shepherding, to the counseling, to the visitation, to the rebuking, to the music, to the praying, to the discipleship must all be centered on a unified theme to exalt God.

2. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to evangelize the lost.

God has given clear directives to His followers to “make disciples” (Matt 28:18-20) and to “train up others” (2 Tim 2:2) so that the gospel is furthered. One of the ingredients to a healthy ministry is that the unconverted are evangelized. This can take place through a myriad of ways—door to door evangelism, street preaching, street witnessing, personal evangelism with friends, family members, coworkers, neighbors, etc., evangelistic meetings/ services, outreach events, concerts, and a host of other ways. One of the goals of ministry is to proclaim Christ and Him crucified at all times not only to edify believers but to evangelize the lost.

3. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to edify believers.

Believers are called to be “built up on the most holy faith” (Jude 1:20). Believers must “encourage one another” (1 Thess 5:11; Heb 3:13). To edify means to encourage or to build up. It could even mean to strengthen. There is no greater way to edify a believer than to remind him of the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves ungodly sinners from God’s eternal wrath. Therefore, every ministry in the local Church should have as its primary focus to edify believers with the glorious truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

4. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to expositionally teach.

Paul charges young Timothy to have one major preoccupation in the local Church, namely, to “preach the Word” (2 Tim 4:2). This must drive his ministry and be the defining point of who he is and what he does in the church. This command is so solemn that Paul charges Timothy “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead” (2 Tim 4:1). There is no more weighty reason to preach the word than this. To preach and teach expositionally means to make clear what God’s Word says and to apply that authorial meaning to the hearts and lives of the hearers. The elders in the early church gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Paul is to not neglect the teaching of the Word (1 Tim 4:13). Every biblical ministry must have the reading, preaching, and teaching of God’s Word as its primary form of worship. The preaching of God’s Word is, in Luther’s words, “the highest form of worship.”

5. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to encourage Christlikeness.

The Church of Jesus Christ must be a holy Church. Christ died to purify a people for Himself (Eph 5:25-28). The church is to be washed in the Word and presented to the Father someday holy and blameless. The will of God for the Church is their “sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). Christlikeness must be the goal of every individual believer and the goal of every corporate church. The local gathering of believers must hold other believers accountable to make certain they are living lives of holiness (1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 6:13-7:1) and fleeing from sinful temptations (2 Tim 2:22). For believers and regular church attenders who live in habitual sin, the most loving thing to do is to conduct church discipline on this believer in hopes that they will repent of their sinful pattern, turn from it, and begin walking in a new life-pattern (cf. Matt 18:15-18; Eph 4:18-25). Thus, the goal of the church is to see believers grow up together into a mature man who are being conformed into the image of Christ (Eph 4:11-16; Col 1:28-29).

6. A biblical philosophy of ministry endeavors to equip missionaries.

Something that many exclude from the philosophy of ministry is the *internal* raising up of believers who are mature and called by God to go out into the world (local or abroad) to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. The responsibility rests with the local church to equip, train, disciple, educate, teach, hold accountable, and support these individuals who are sent out by the congregation to further the work of Christ’s church one earth. Thus, part of the goal of the local church should include the raising up and equipping of men and women who are internally trained and educated and who have faithfully served and proven themselves trustworthy and the sending out of these individuals supported by the local church to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in other parts of the world for the glory of Christ and for the advancement of His Church.