Building a Care Crew: Mobilizing Members to Minister

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The Biblical Foundations for Mobilizing Members to Minister – Does It Really Matter?

The demands on a pastor’s time seem to be unending. For a pastor to set aside time to select and train church members for ministry, it will require a serious commitment on his part. But this commitment, enabled by God’s grace, is well worth it! Consider the following truths.

1. **The pastor has been instructed to “mobilize members to minister”**. *(Eph 4:11-14)*

   A pastor who desires to be faithful to the Chief Shepherd must give careful attention to what He has assigned him to do. Faithful shepherds look ultimately to only one Person for direction.

   Christ’s assignment to pastors: *equip the saints!* A pastor’s teaching and preaching helps the church know Christ, and equips them to properly relate to each other. This is the ministry of God’s Word that helps believers practice the Truth in regard to real-life, everyday challenges.

   So local church ministers must embrace people-ministry! No doubt, books and study time are vital, but being a pastor means loving people! You have to spend time with people. Spending time ministering, crying, praying and rejoicing with church members will help you better understand the people to whom you minister – and allow them to see you.

   One of the reasons for spending time with church members in everyday situations is to equip them for ministry. Helping church members to be ready to speak God’s Truth and provide Christlike care is the ministry a pastor has been assigned by Christ. This equipping ministry is part of the criteria by which faithful, pastoral ministry will be measured.

2. **The church needs the benefits of “members mobilized to minister”**. *(Eph 4:15-16)*

   The benefit of God’s Truth being embraced and exercised in the church cannot be underestimated – it certainly wasn’t by Paul. The “building up of itself in love” is the result of “the proper working of each individual part.” Pastors who equip church members to minister well inside the local body help their Christian brothers and sisters learn to function well.

   Remember, the chief goal in pastoring Christ’s church is not to have a big church; it is to cultivate a spiritually healthy church. Ephesians 4:15-16 provides one aspect of a healthy church. When the body is functioning well, ministering God’s Truth and providing Christlike care to those who are facing the trials of life in a sin-cursed world, it provides evidence of God’s life-giving health.
So, my pastor-friend, it’s worth the investment of time to help church members minister to others! Help the members of your church understand God’s Word and help them to pass on that Truth to others in the body – especially to those who are facing difficulties.


   Local church ministry is people-intensive work. People, especially in times of significant trials, need to be shepherded, and you are to pastor them! Remember Paul’s charge to the Ephesian elders, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock . . . be shepherds of the church of God.” (Acts 20:27-28)

   But the needs of people are great and you cannot meet all the needs! The great news is that God doesn’t expect the pastor to single-handedly meet the needs of the entire body! The pastor must provide oversight for the flock but this doesn’t mean he is personally involved with the specific details of each situation.

   Moses (Exodus 18:13-26) serves as an Old Testament example and the Apostles (Acts 6:1-4) as a New Testament example of the need for godly leaders to surround themselves with godly “helpers” to carry out the work of the ministry. In a day like ours, with the demands we face, Jethro’s words couldn’t be more helpful: *What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone.* (Exodus 18:17-18)

The Benefits of Mobilizing Members to Minister – Is It Really Worth It?

As was mentioned earlier, there is great benefit to “Building a Care Crew” in your church. Let’s look at some more benefits here.

1. *Mobilizing Ministers to Care keeps you focused on what God has called you to do.*

   Can you imagine how disappointing it would be to stand before Christ, having been very busy doing many things in the time of the ministry He gave you, only to find out that you were doing many of the wrong things!

   The time to address this issue is now – while we are ministering for Christ in His church. Contemplating what Christ expects a pastor to “give himself” to is an important exercise.

   So what is it that God expects faithful pastors to do? What is Christ’s measurement standard for pastoral faithfulness in His church? What are the demands which, if not controlled, will lead you off-target from your calling? How would *Mobilizing Members to Minister* in your church help you to stay on-target? Write your thoughts below.

   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

2. *Mobilizing Members to Care helps the church cultivate healthy habits.*

   Healthy churches don’t just happen! They are the result of God’s grace ministered through Christlike shepherds who preach and teach God’s Truth, so that church members are equipped to minister the Word to each other in real-life situations.
By investing the time necessary to help church members embrace opportunities to care for others in the body, a pastor is helping the church cultivate some of the habits of a healthy church. Notice several of these:

- Mutual Ministry
- Team Ministry
- Humility and Service
- Evangelism and Encouragement

So, by God’s grace and for Christ’s glory, commit to make *Mobilizing Members to Minister* a bedrock principle and practice in your ministry.

3. **Mobilizing Members to Minister will help the members who are ministering.**

Not only is the church body strengthened by our commitment to *Mobilize Members to Minister* but the individual parts of the body are helped greatly – the members who are ministering. Biblical example and ministry experience have taught many of us this truth. Some of our greatest times of growth have come through having to minister eyeball-to-eyeball with those who are facing times of great physical, emotional or spiritual challenge!

a. **Learning the greatest needs of people – to know Christ and embrace His Word.**

   Individuals who are hurting do not just need a “shoulder to cry on” – any unbeliever can do that for them. They need someone to point them to the One who can truly give them joy – even in the middle of a difficult time.

   - It may be that the “hurting” they face is God’s way of getting their eyes off of themselves and onto Him. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
   - It may be that the “hurting” individual is facing the reality of Proverbs 13:15. Minister the grace, mercy and loving-kindness of the Lord to them.
   - It may be that the “hurting” individual needs to come to Christ for salvation (note Christ’s ministry to the Samaritan Woman in John 4:7-43). Bring them to Christ!

   As the doctors administer medicine to the physical body, God’s person, using God’s Word, fulfills God’s work when he ministers to the inner man to bring spiritual healing.

b. **Stepping out in faith to do the right thing even if they don’t have all the answers.**

   Who among us truly likes uncertainty? We tend to want to know everything first – then we are willing to take action. Ministry to people who face the realities of life in this world is not “cookie cutter,” Many times we ministry simply by stepping out in faith, trusting God, His Word and His Spirit to give us wisdom in ministering to people. But this is exactly where God’s wants us to be and where he provides His grace – dependent on Him!
4. **Mobilizing Members to Minister provides an opportunity to correct wrong thinking.**

There is one more benefit for *Mobilizing Members to Minister*. This one will require your careful consideration – something that only you can do for yourself and the ministry God has entrusted to you. If you have struggled to equip church members to truly care for others in the body in significant ways it may be that God wants to change you.

Do you struggle with any of the following:

a. “Lone-Ranger” Ministry Mindset
b. “Superman” Complex
c. “Last-Minute Manger” Syndrome

**The Opportunities for Mobilizing Members to Minister – Where Can This Be Done?**

A church’s Congregational Care Ministry is the church’s opportunity and responsibility to minister God’s Word and provide Christlike care to hurting individuals, within the context of the local church. Notice that the center of the “Care Crew’s” ministry is the Word of God. The hurting individual’s greatest need is to know Christ and to embrace His sufficient Word. Christlike care involves meeting the needs of the hurting individual by providing practical assistance and compassionate support. It is part of the “doing good” Paul mentions in Gal 6:10.

So what are the opportunities to minister God’s Truth and provide Christlike care to those who are facing life’s challenges? What are the potential issues in one’s heart and what is the Truth we seek to minister to them?

1. **Mobilize Members to Minister to Sick and Suffering Church Members.**

   Potential Heart Issues: _______________________________________________________
   
   Possible Practical Needs: ___________________________________________________
   
   Truths to Minister: _______________________________________________________

2. **Mobilize Members to Minister to Sorrowing Church Members.**

   Potential Heart Issues: ___________________________________________________
   
   Possible Practical Needs: __________________________________________________
   
   Truths to Minister: _______________________________________________________
4. Mobilize Members to Minister to Searching Church Members.

Potential Heart Issues: _______________________________________________________

Possible Practical Needs: ___________________________________________________

Truths to Minister: _________________________________________________________

A Practical Strategy for Mobilizing Members to Minister – How Do You Do It?

Please note that all church members ought to be caring for the body – not just your “Care Team”. Ministry is not just for those who have a position or a title! The entire congregation ought to be practicing the “one another” commands of the New Testament.

When it comes to recruiting your “Care Team” you must do it in a way that promotes the commitment they will need to make to God, as they carry out the ministry in the church. I offer the following as suggestions of how you can do this.

1. Pray for those whom you will recruit for ministry – effective ministry recruiting begins with focused prayer. Remember, Jesus told us that the first step is to ask the “Lord of the harvest” to send forth laborers. (Matthew 9:38) As God brings men and women to mind, write their names down and continue to pray for them.

2. Build relationships with potential leaders – seek to get to know these church members. Enlist the help of your wife to get to know the ladies. You focus on the men – go to breakfast or lunch with the men or play racquetball or tennis with them. Use these informal settings to evaluate their ministry capacity.

   Help them to understand and embrace the biblical principles which help believers know how and where to best serve Christ in the local church:

   • **Giftedness:** what do you prefer to do in the church (speaking or serving; tasks or people)? (Eph 4:11-12; 1Pet 4:10-11; Rom 12:6-8 and 1Cor 12:1-31)
   
   • **Burdens:** what has God put in your heart; who do you have a burden to reach? (Philippians 2:13; Psalms 37:4; Nehemiah 2:12)
   
   • **Opportunities:** what doors has God opened for you to speak or serve; what could you do? (Gal 6:10; Phil 4:10)
   
   • **Experiences:** how has God prepared you to serve others with what He has taught you? (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

3. Have a “formal meeting” with potential leaders to discuss their potential ministry. These should be done face to face – not over the phone.

   a. share the vision for the ministry
   
   b. share the specific area of ministry in which you are asking for their involvement
   
   c. share your thoughts on why you think he or she would be the right person for this position and the ministry team
   
   d. share the ministry description
4. Ask for a commitment – but give the person some time to make it. Allow him to pray about it and think it through. If the person is married, make sure he or she brings their spouse into the decision. Generally, a one to two week window is sufficient time to make the decision.

5. Once the commitment is made to undertake a specific ministry assignment, your job is JUST BEGINNING! You must train and support the church member!
   a. meetings – personal and ministry team
   b. books and other resources
   c. seminars and conferences
   d. communication avenues – especially electronic means

Building a “Care Team” is not always easy! It takes time to coach ministry teams. But don’t forget that the hope and the power for this ministry is not in ourselves – it is in God. The gospel provides hope for men and women today. It IS worth it to undertake this kind of work.

It’s not too late for you and your church to begin intentionally Mobilizing Members for Ministry! It’s never too late! A Chinese proverb says, “The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.”