

HOW DEEP IS YOUR MINISTRY?

September 16, 2007

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Luke 5:1-9

As you hear the word, “ministry,” ask yourself to whom does that word apply? Do you think it only applies to preachers, ministers, deacons, elders, and Sunday school teachers? There are many people outside of the walls of the church who are looking for a Ray of Hope and who need to live in a City of Hope. We need people who have already been touched by a Ray of Hope to touch others who need to be touched. We must come out of our misery and grow into our ministry. How deep is your ministry? Luke affords us a look at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry.

In the text, Jesus goes to his hometown of Nazareth to tell his people of his ministry. They dismissed him and violently drove him out of town. Jesus was able to endure being tempted and rejected because his ministry was planted on a firm foundation. ***If our ministries are going to have any depth, we have to submit ourselves to the governance of the Holy Spirit.*** Total submission to the will of God keeps our flesh and human reasoning from taking over. If you have a shallow relationship with God, you will have a shallow ministry.

Your ministry has to be deeper than your need for validation from those closest to you. We are afraid of what people might say and fear that they might disapprove. Jesus went home thinking that if he told his people about his ministry, they might want to participate. But instead, they rejected him. Don’t rely on the validation of those closest to you. Those closest to you keep reminding you of what you used to be because they can’t see who you are now. Their opinion does not change the fact that we have been changed by the Holy Spirit that is within us. Jesus kept moving in spite of being rejected and disappointed. He went down to the synagogue on the Sabbath because he realized that no matter how he felt there were still demons that needed to be cast out and people that needed to be healed. After church was out, he knew that he had to go outside of church and practice what he heard in church. We have to realize the game is played in the streets. You can’t do all of your work in the church. It is just the pep rally for the game.

Your ministry has to be deeper than the last service you attended. There has to be more to ministry than church attendance. There were community issues that needed to be addressed. Jesus knew that just hanging out in the synagogue wasn’t going to solve anything. We are so into clichés. It is easier to preach about “God making a way” than actually trying to provide a resolution to the issues. We have people who can’t afford lawyers but need legal assistance. We have lawyers in the church. Develop a ministry where you can provide some assistance for free. We have people who can’t afford medical care and/or prescriptions but we have nurses, doctors, and pharmacists in the church. **Ephesians 3:20** God does the exceeding and abundant through us.

Ministry can be inconvenient except for when we need ministry for ourselves. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. Jesus had to come out of town to raise Lazarus from the dead. In the text, Jesus asked Simon to put out a little. How do we put out a little? Complete new members’ orientation. Smile at people as you walk by. Pay your tithes. Join a ministry for which you are skilled. Train someone else to do your job. Just put out a little. The more we see events and the more we see ministry needs, we need to be putting out. Those who are

permanent visitors of the church just put out a little. Jesus' expectations of us are progressive because he already knows what we are capable of doing. Jesus really didn't ask much of Simon right then. He just asked for the boat. Pastor Hale just wants to use our singing boat, ushering boat, etc. Most of us who don't put out a little think we are ready for a lot. Jesus says if you just let him use your boat, your vessel for a little while he will let you graduate to the next level. ***You have to reach a point where you stop talking about going deeper and do something.*** Church folk are known for just talking about the next level but not doing anything about it. You have to do more than talk. The City of Hope had to do more than talk. People in shallow waters are those you only see on Sunday morning. Your ministry shouldn't be so secret that nobody knows what it is.

When God gives you a vision you have to be obedient and move into action. People are in need now. Sometimes when there is a perceived long period of time and action, we give up. We were not created to stay in shallow waters. We have to let down our nets. The problem is we are afraid of the fish we might catch if we let down our nets. Honestly we were one of those fish. Somebody's net caught us so the least we could do is go fish for some other people. Use your influence. There are those of us who are persons of influence. God gave you that influence for the kingdom. Use it for more than a business deal for yourself. Use it for the kingdom. Are you walking in the purpose for which God created you or are you too afraid and think someone else will do it? God created YOU for that purpose.

Peace.

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