

ESSENTIALS - Session 6 "The Essential Ministry of Other People"

INTRO

Testimony

- Understanding the Ministry of People God Uses in Our Discipleship
- It is essential for the disciple to see that God intends to interact with us in a variety of ways and in particular ways through a variety of people and through particular people. To live and experience the life God calls us to, relating to and receiving from people is essential!

Christ died for his church. We celebrate this glorious truth together and say, "Amen!" When Christ died for his church, he died for the people, not for our church buildings. While our buildings are certainly a blessing, the church is still the church without the building. Christ died for those who were dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph2:1). All who are in Christ comprise the church universal. All of this is according to the wonderful plan of God, but God's plan goes even further.

THE CHURCH

Grace Dispensed With a Strategy

- In the first 3 chapters of Ephesians, Paul is dealing with the eternal truths of the Christian faith and the function of the church, "US," in God's plan or strategy. As we move on into chapter 4, Paul begins to speak to what each member of the body must be and do if the church is to function in a way that will carry out Gods plan for her.

Eph 4: 1-7 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. 7 But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- Paul begins to explain how Gods strategy to use us in his glorious plan to bring unity to a disunified world. He begins with faith in Christ and with the character we should display in our Walk. He uses words like *Humility, gentleness, patience, peace, and unity in the spirit*. These are the fruits of the spirit that God uses in His church, through His people, to bring reconciliation between man and man, and man and God.

- This is part of God's strategic plan, to spread his gospel using ordinary people like you and me. Each of us has a role to play in the church. God will use the giftings that he has given us and resulting fruits to equip us to do our part. These gifts transfer grace to those around us. You can be used to encourage, to love to help, to give correction, to listen, give comfort, and there are so many ways God can and will use you if you allow him to.

These themes of Unity, gifts, and the resulting fruit from those gifts God gives us, will continue throughout this session. We will discuss how God in His grace and mercy, allows us to participate in His great plan of salvation for His church.

One ministry serves the other. Pastors are the supply line; Church members are the front line. The Church is a family. Embrace your identity as a brother or sister in that family. If you see a need, fill it. If you have a need, express it.

STRENGTH THROUGH GATHERING

Heb 10: 24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

- The writer of Hebrews outlines 3 practical reasons why we should gather together.
 - Let us consider how to stir one another on to love and good works. To consider others or be considered by others, we must first gather. So that we may stir up and encourage those in our body. Christian perseverance is a community endeavor (meet with one another). Every day that goes by, brings us closer to the return of Christ.
 - We should worship together - Worshipping together is a time to focus on God. To hear His word, sing His praises, to speak of His love, faithfulness, and truth. To pray together and help those who may have needs.
 - Encourage and be encouraged – When we gather together, we have opportunities to encourage those who may be experiencing difficult times. We are reminded we are not alone. Gathering together provokes us to love and good works (service, accountability)

Our God is omnipresent, but when we gather together, His spirit seems to be revealed in special ways among the church.

Variety of People/Gifts Needed

1 Cor 12: 4-20 4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between

spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

Gal. 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

If Your resume' is sparse, your skills unimpressive, and your wisdom just average, fret not. God can use even you.

Variety of Gifts, Service, and Activities: One Spirit One Lord, One God Empowering All

- This is not an all-inclusive list of the gifts/Fruits that God provides his church. You may not have many of these gifts, but you do have gifts that God can use to empower edify and build up the body.
- Paul is pointing out that there are many gifts, activities, and service opportunities needed for the church to operate and function in a way that will achieve her ultimate purpose. God has provided the way to achieve this through gifting individuals like you and me.
- **1 Corinth 12: 18-20** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.
 - We each have our individual role to play within the body of Christ. We are united and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do our part “For the common good.”

God uses all kinds of people for his glorious purpose to show his superior power. Do not begrudge your weakness. Do not lament your insufficiency. God uses all those who humble themselves before the cross, boasting only in him and his strength.

- Paul uses the illustration of the body to bring home the point that we are all important to the church. No one part is less important than another for the body to function the way it is designed.
- No gift or act of service is insignificant. **1 Corinth 12: 11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

LEADERS

Eph 4:11-16 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Heb 13:7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

- Pastors shepherd and lead. If they are to lead, we are to follow.
- Pastors are not the only ones called to lead and or teach.
- Leaders are held to a standard.

THE SHAPING INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Eph 6: 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- Generally, our early beliefs and values are formed by what we see and hear from our parents and family. They often help to shape our personalities, our values, the way we do daily life.
- Many of our ideas and concepts of marriage and parenting can be formed by the influence our parents have had on our lives.

THE TRANSFORMATIVE NATURE OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:21-24 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

1 Peter 3:1-2, 7 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Eccl. 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

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OLDER DISCIPLES

2 Tim 2:1-2 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Titus 2:1-8 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech

that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

- Older disciples – This can refer to both older in age and or more Mature in Christ.

ESSENTIAL TAKEAWAYS

- There are a variety of ways and in particular ways through a variety of people and through particular people that God chooses to use in his church as he wills.
- God, through his Holy Spirit will equip you for your role in the body.
- Each part of the body is Essential. Every part needs to work together in Unity to function properly
- What gifts has God given you? If you're not sure, pray that God would open your eyes to the gifts he has for you. Let the Spirit guide you in the ways he has chosen specifically for you to be used in the body and His plan for His church.

You didn't go to an Ivy League school

You're not a cum laude graduate

You have no honorary doctorates

You've never written a best seller or given a TED talk

You have an unimpressive family background

IT'S OK Really! Why? Because God is not impressed with your resume'. God does not need you to prove your worthiness. He is not impressed by your collection of readers, likes or connections. He can still use you and the gifts he has given you to stir up others to love and good works.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Who has God used in significant ways in your life? In what way?
- 2) Has God used you in the lives of others? How?
- 3) Do you have people in your life to hold you accountable?
- 4) Why is it important to gather and worship together regularly?
- 5) What gifts has God given you, and how are you exercising those gifts?
- 6) When were you saved, who did God use to open your eyes, and how?

HOMEWORK!!! ...Because the deepest part of your discipleship is personal!!

- Pray for God to open opportunities for you to use the specific gifts that he has given you to stir up those in the church to love and good works.
- Pray about what your next steps for growing in community with others might look like.
- Pray for your leaders in the church.