



SAVING GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH • MOORESVILLE

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

A philosophy of ministry is a summation of biblical principles that guides us as a local church. It explains why we do what we do and how we do it. Although every church has a philosophy of ministry, some are built more on the preferences and opinions of man rather than the timeless principles found in God's Word. When we develop ministry values from clear biblical principles, from them we find the basis for our leadership, direction for ministry and worship, and our foundation for life in the church. We believe the following principles are non-negotiable in ministry life:

THE EXALTATION OF GOD

Because God is supreme, His Word governs us, His glory motivates us, and His purposes define our ministry. When God is exalted to His rightful place of honor and authority, there are many significant implications for ministry life:

A PROPER VIEW OF MAN.

- When a ministry is driven by a high view of God, it will have a proper (low) view of man. Man is not the center of reality. God does not exist for man, rather man exists for God. (Romans 11:36)
- In his natural state, man is both unwilling and unable to seek the Lord (Romans 8:7, 1 Corinthians 2:14). He is not the victim in his life story, he is the villain (James 1:13-15). Man's fundamental problem is sin which alienates him from God. He is not to be coddled in his sin but confronted with the truth and called to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus (Mark 1:15, Acts 17:30)

A PROPER VIEW OF MINISTRY

- When a ministry is driven by the exaltation of God, it is protected from man-centeredness, secular methodology, and misplaced confidence in human wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:17, 2:5).
- Ministry "success" is not measured by popularity, perceived effectiveness, numbers, or expansion. Instead, it is measured by faithfulness to God (1 Corinthians 4:2). Furthermore, all glory and credit goes to God for any ministry fruit that is produced (1 Corinthians 3:7).

A PROPER VIEW OF WORSHIP

- When a ministry is driven by the exaltation of God, instead of focusing on what people receive, experience, or prefer, worship is driven by what pleases God. The question is not "Did people enjoy worship?" but, "Was God pleased and rightly exalted?" (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- Worship will be governed by truth, not trends (John 4:23-24). We do not invent how God should be worshiped; we respond to how He has revealed Himself.
- The greater our understanding of God's holiness, majesty, sovereignty, and grace, the greater our worship. Shallow views of God inevitably produce shallow worship.

A PROPER VIEW OF THE WORD OF GOD

- When God is exalted, His Word retains its' rightful place in the life of the church. This produces a church consisting of those who humbly tremble at the Word of God (Isaiah 66:2).
- God's Word alone is fully inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), inerrant (Psalm 119:60), infallible (Psalm 12:6; 19:7-9), authoritative (Matthew 5:18-20; John 10:35), and sufficient for everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). Therefore, it is binding upon the life and conscience of every individual and the sole and supreme rule of faith and practice for Christ's church and Christ's people.
- The Word is the instrument the Lord uses to save the lost (Romans 10:17), and to sanctify His people (John 17:17).
- The Word of God is the standard of truth by which all other truth claims are measured. In other words, all scientific claims, modern psychology ideologies, and all human experiences are subject to Scripture and must be informed by Scripture.

The exaltation of God IS the heart of our ministry, which provides the foundation and framework for the following ministry distinctives:

THE EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURES

When we are driven by exaltation of God, we will be convinced that His voice is the only relevant voice when it comes to truth and the spiritual life. We believe that God has spoken clearly in His Word and that He powerfully works through the proclamation of His Word to transform the hearts of all mankind. Our commitment to expository preaching reflects our conviction that God is honored when His Word is faithfully explained and applied.

Expository preaching is "the authoritative proclamation of God's Word in which the preacher clearly sets forth the divinely intended meaning of the biblical text and brings the contemporary implications of its timeless truth to bear on the lives of the people." (footnote – Dr. Matt Waymeyer)

There are several reasons why we believe expository preaching should be a non-negotiable in the life of any ministry:

- In the Scriptures, it is not one method to consider but a mandate to carry out (2 Timothy 4:1-2).
- The doctrine of Scripture necessitates expository preaching. In other words, because the Scriptures alone are authoritative, sufficient, inerrant, and infallible, the preacher's responsibility is not to create a message, but to faithfully bring out and proclaim the message God has already given.

Expository preaching serves as a means of preserving the purity of the church by exposing false professions and guarding against unregenerate membership (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

- Expository preaching ensures that substitute voices and authorities do not govern the church. Without a firm commitment to expository preaching, things like secular wisdom, human opinions, tradition, church history, confessions, and creeds end up governing the church rather than the Word (Matthew 15:6-9). We are not against creeds and confessions, but we are pro Bible! Biblical exposition ensures a church that it is indeed Christ's church and they are receiving His unadulterated message.
- Expository preaching accelerates the work of the Holy Spirit, who uses the truth to save sinners and sanctify the saints (Romans 10:17, John 17:17).

THE EDIFICATION OF THE SAINTS

Pastors and teachers have been given by Christ to the church so that the people of God would be edified (Ephesians 4:11-16). Furthermore, church leaders are to shepherd the flock of God that is among them (1 Peter 5:2). However, due to the rise of the seeker-sensitive and pragmatic movement of the 20th century, the church has neglected this priority and has turned its primary focus and attention to “reaching” the unchurched. As a result, God’s people are neglected and become spiritually malnourished, and left to suffer in a state of perpetual immaturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). While certainly not neglecting the lost and evangelism, we believe the priority of Christ for His church is to equip God’s people to grow in faith, holiness, knowledge, love, and usefulness (Matthew 28:20, Colossians 1:28).

Christ established the church as the primary context for spiritual growth and maturity. A church that fails to move believers toward maturity risks producing generations of spiritual infants who lack discernment, depth, and usefulness for the kingdom (Hebrews 5:12-14).

When a ministry is committed to the edification of the saints, there are several implications:

- The saints are equipped for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12).
- It promotes Christlikeness and doctrinal unity (Ephesians 4:13)
- It promotes spiritual discernment and protects the church from error and doctrinal confusion (Ephesians 4:14)
- It results in the whole church body benefitting from each member’s usefulness. In other words, it prevents passive spectating and instead promotes active participation.
- The church becomes reproducible (2 Timothy 2:2).
- Ministry isn’t focused merely on gathering people together in the name of Christ, but growing them unto maturity (Colossians 1:28).
- The church provides the context for spiritual accountability and holiness (Hebrews 3:12-3, 10:24-25)
- The church retains its function as the pillar and support of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
- The church fulfills its design as God’s chosen theater to display His glory on earth (Ephesians 3:21)

THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE LOST

In what is known as the Great Commission, the church is called to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19). The other verbs in the verse instruct us on how we are to make disciples. Each one of them is a participle and therefore could be literally rendered: “Going, baptizing, teaching.” Those three participles are modifying the main verb “make disciples.”

“Going” is the verb we are focusing on for this ministry priority. The Great Commission operates under the assumption that the church will not be stagnant but rather proactive with this mission by proactively reaching out and proclaiming the gospel to the lost. This principle is applied in many different ways, both individually and corporately.

We are “going” as we:

- Preach the gospel in our worship services (2 Timothy 4:5).
- Minister the gospel to the lost in our home and other spheres of our influence (2 Timothy 3:14-15).
- Train up men for ministry and send them out to establish churches in areas where there is no gospel witness, whether in our country or abroad (Acts 14:23, 2 Timothy 2:2).
- Give our time and resources to the church so that our support can enable the church to fulfill its mission (1 Corinthians 9:14, 1 Timothy 5:17).
- Pray for the Lord to raise up faithful laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38).
- Love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35).
- Live transformed lives in truth and holiness (Matthew 5:16).