

REVIVAL NEWS

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**** JANUARY 2020 **** JANUARY 2020 **** JANUARY 2020 ****

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Eternal One [YAHWEH], as the waters cover the sea” Habakkuk 2:14. This verse gives clear expression to God’s purpose in the earth. For this Scripture to be fulfilled, the work of the ministry must be done. This is a process and takes time. Even in Noah’s flood, it took quite some time for the waters to cover the earth.

God gave to mankind what is known as the ‘Creation Mandate’ in **Genesis 1:28**. Having created mankind as both male and female (**Gen.1:27**), He then blessed them and said to them *“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”*.

[Please note that the word translated ‘man’ in **Genesis 1:26**, refers to mankind – both male and female. It is the very word ‘adam’.]

The work of the ministry is summed up in **Matthew 28:19-20** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age [end of the world].”* The world as it now is will not always remain; it will come to an end. All those who do not believe in God and do not obey the Lord Jesus will be destroyed with an everlasting destruction (**2 Thess. 1:7-10**). We need to make sure we are in the ark of salvation in our generation. Jesus told us clearly in **Matthew 24:36-44** that we are to be ready for the coming of the Lord. **The work of the ministry is to prepare the church for, and to warn the world of, His coming.**

In the days of Noah, the wicked were destroyed and taken away in the days of the flood (**Matt.24:38-39**). It will be the same in the coming of the Son of Man – the ones taken will be the wicked, but the righteous will be left, as in the days of Noah (**Matt.24:40-41**). Be prepared!

WHAT IS THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY?

7 steps to fruitful ministry

The work can be summed up in seven steps to fruitful ministry, in planting New Testament churches. The seven steps are:

- i) **prayer** – two or three gathering in His name, **Matthew 18:19-20**
- ii) **evangelism/outreach**, reaching out with the gospel – new souls will be added, **Mark 16:15-16**
- iii) **nurture**, looking after the new ones coming to Christ, **1 Peter 2:2**, making sure that the young Christians receive the milk of the word (**Heb.5:12**)

- iv) **discipleship**, teaching the believers the word thoroughly, **Matthew 28:19-20**
- v) **training and equipping** the disciples to do the work of the ministry, **Eph.4:12, Col.1:28**
- vi) **planting the church**, that is, the gathering of two or three or more to pray, to reach out and to nurture and disciple new ones. The New Testament church did not have dedicated church buildings gathering on Sundays only, but the church continued ‘*daily from house to house*’, **Acts 2:46**
- vii) **emergence of ministries**: as trained disciples go about the work, ministry gifts will begin to manifest, **Eph.4:11 & 1Cor.12:28**

Making disciples

There is another effective way of summarising the work of the ministry. This is to “*Go and make disciples*” (**Matt.28:19**) and there are six clear steps in making disciples.

1. Preaching the gospel, **Acts 8:5&12**
2. Baptising those who believe, **Acts 8:12, Acts 2:38**
3. Teaching the new believers, **Acts 11:26**
4. Bringing them into a functioning fellowship, **Acts 2:42-47**
5. Bringing them to an understanding and regular practice of the Lord’s Table, **Acts 2:46, 1Cor.11:23-26**
6. Teaching the disciples how to pray, **Matt.6:9:13, Luke 11:1-4, 1Tim.2:1-10**

One of the goals of the ministry is to disciple every believer to the place where the disciples can teach others. The writer to the Hebrews says that all the believers “*ought to be teachers*” (**Heb.5:12**). This is in the context of laying “*the first principles of the oracles of God*” (**Heb.5:12**) and this is in the context of teaching the six foundational principles referred to in **Hebrews 6:1-2**.

Jesus gave five ministries

“*He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers*” **Ephesians 4:11**.

A summary way of understanding the five ministries:

- **Apostles** lay the foundations and function in governmental authority, overseeing the building of the church (**1Cor.3:10-13**).
- **Prophets** point the way, giving guidance and direction, as well as correction; making known the mystery of Christ (**Eph.3:5, Acts 11:27-30**)
- **Evangelists** reach out and gather new souls (**Acts 8:5-12**).
- **Pastors** guard, feed and look after the flock [the family], (**Acts 20:28, 1 Pet.5:1-4**).
- **Teachers** ground us in the word and get the word into us [doctrine], (**Titus 2:1**). The overseer/bishop/elder must be able to teach, “*holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict*” **Titus 1:9**.

These ministries are given for: (Ephesians 4:12)

- i) the equipping/perfecting of the saints

ii) the work of the ministry. Obedience to do the work of the ministry causes something to be built. The apostolic pattern is: short term training schools and sending out, having been taught and trained through experience

iii) the building up of the Body of Christ

Most churches today are not really doing the work of the ministry. The five ministries given by Jesus Christ, must do the work of the ministry, whether it be as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher. In most gatherings of church leaders, the emphasis is almost exclusively on pastors, not acknowledging or receiving or supporting the other ministry gifts. The Pastor is only one of the five gifts.

The work is the equipping/perfecting of the saints

The word “*equipping*” refers to a physician setting a broken bone in surgery; it is bringing the church into functional healing and order. The church today is often dysfunctional, divided, scared of each other, and separated from each other. God is doing an amazing work bringing ministers together in various configurations to be able to become His church in every place.

We need the five ministries to bring healing and functional order, so that each saint is able to function as a participant and contributor in the body of Christ.

The work is to edify/build up the Body of Christ

The word “*edifying*” SC#3619 Greek *oikodome* meaning architecture i.e. a structure, its figurative meaning is ‘confirmation’, translated as: edifying [x7], building [x6], edification [x4]. In **Ephesians 4:12** and in **verse 16**, the idea conveyed is progress, resulting from patient effort. This is the work of the five ministries: the building of the church, the house of God, making progress through patient effort.

In **Acts 14:22** Paul and Barnabas were “*strengthening the souls of the disciples*”, that is, confirming them in the faith and providing support that the brethren can lean upon and be strengthened by. The apostles were exhorting the disciples to continue in the faith. This word *exhort* means to call near, to invite or invoke. The apostles were calling for the disciples to continue in the faith.

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY CONTINUES ‘TILL’ - Ephesians 4:13

The work of the ministry is to continue until we all come to the:

i. **Unity of the faith** - we come to agreement in the faith, that is, what we believe.

We especially need apostles and prophets to bring the revelation of the mystery (**Eph.3:5**). Apostles and prophets are needed to be the foundational ministries for the building of the House of God (**Eph.2:20**), making known the reality of Jesus Christ being the Chief Cornerstone. The faith is “that which we believe”. It is the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (**Jude 3**).

Warfare goes on as we come to the unity of the faith together. This is the warfare that Paul refers to in **2 Corinthians 10:1-6**, and we need to exercise the weapons that God has given us according to the mighty power of God.

The faith is the Doctrine of Jesus (**John 7:16-18**). He said, “*My doctrine is not My own, but His who sent Me*”. It is actually the doctrine of God that will bring us into

the unity of the faith. We must be willing to submit to the word of God and to obey the word of God as the apostles practiced and demonstrated. For example, the doctrine and practice of baptism: Jesus said *“Baptising [immersing] them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matt.28:19), and the apostles obeyed Jesus by baptising in the name of Jesus [see Acts 2:38; 8:16 & 19:5]

ii. **To the knowledge of the Son of God**

We all believe Jesus is the Son of God, but what does it mean for all of us to come to the knowledge of the Son of God? The knowledge of the Son of God is that *“God was manifested in the flesh”* (1 Timothy 3:16).

Who is Jesus? There has been a huge attack for centuries to take away the Divinity, the Godhood of Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Son of God; He is God in the flesh.

The Son identifies fully with the Father, and the Father identifies in the Son (John 14:8-9, 5:17-19). All the fullness of the Godhead is found in Christ (Col.2:9).

Are you willing to lay down your life for this doctrine? It is only as we come to this knowledge of the Son of God that we will see the glory of YAHWEH revealed in the earth (Habakkuk 2:14).

iii. **To a Perfect Man**

This is a mature corporate body, fitted and joined together in Christ (Eph.2:20, Eph.4:16). This is a body of saints who have been properly founded, disciplined, taught, able to minister the word (1Peter 4:11), and able to teach (Hebrews 5:12).

How do we bring the church to be a corporate Perfect Man? By the children growing up in the truth, no longer being children tossed by every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness and deceitful scheming (Eph.4:14). Unfortunately, this is the work of men. But eventually the children of God who have been properly taught will no longer be tricked. They will not be led astray by various and strange doctrines (Heb.13:9).

We are to bring the saints to speak the truth in love (Eph.4:15). It can be easy to speak the truth in a bit of agitation, but we need to speak it in love. The goal is to grow up in all things into Him who is the Head – Christ.

Then the body gets released to function in “agape” love. No longer full of ambition; no longer seeking our own honour.

The Work of the ministry according to Paul in Colossians

Colossians 1:24-29

v.24 - being willing to be afflicted for the sake of the church

v.25 – knowing the call of God to the ministry: that it is a stewardship of grace from God (Eph.3:2).

A steward is someone who is taking personal responsibility for his master’s property. We are

servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries: we are servants and stewards (1.Cor.4:2).

The ministry is to fulfill the Word of God; it is the ministry of the Word

v.26 - the ministry is to make known the mystery, bringing the saints to the revelation of the mystery.

According to **1 Corinthians 2:6-7**, the mysteries are the hidden wisdom of God and they are

for the mature, having been “*ordained [pre-determined] before the ages for our glory*”.

v.27 – the revelation of the mystery is “*Christ in you; the hope of glory*”. This is the knowledge of

the riches of the glory of God. Paul says that the riches of the glory are “*His inheritance in the saints*” (**Eph.1:18**), and Paul prays that we will come to know these riches.

v.28 – the work of the ministry:

- Preach Christ
- Warn every man
- Teach every man
- Using wisdom
- To present every man perfect in Christ Jesus

v.29 – to this end we are to labour, striving according to His working, which works in us mightily. It

is God’s operative power working in us to do the work of the ministry.

The work of the ministry is to be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word

In **Acts 6:4** the apostles would not leave the ministry to do the practical business. They were committed to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. The primary ministry is the ministry of the Word.

The work of the ministry is to impart the knowledge of the word

2 Timothy 2:2 - that which you have received from me among many witness, impart to faithful men and women who can teach others also.

The work of the ministry is the work of Discipleship

It is in the house; it is in the family; it is in the fellowship (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9 & Matthew 28:18-20**).

PLAN TO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

- Do not worry what ministry gift or calling you are
- Just do the work
- The reality is that there are people you need to speak to about Jesus, and there are believers who need to be taught the word so that they can grow up.

Remember the first works – Acts 2:42 – do them and you will be in love with Jesus and be an example to all who relate to you. Doing the first works is to become our normal lifestyle, not a religious practice.

The first works are: **“apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, prayers”**. Do these things in a real way.

Invite visitors into what you are doing

- We read Scriptures
- We study Scriptures
- We exhort people
- We pray for people
- We share meals with people
- We discuss strategy with people as to how to reach others

Thus *“the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH, as the waters cover the sea” Habakkuk 2:14!*