

## **Chapter 20**

### ***STEPS TO EFFECTIVE MINISTRY***

God has called each of us who are Christian believers to service or ministry in His kingdom. We are called to be His children, members of the family of God. We are called to be part of the church, the body of Christ. And we are called to serve in carrying on the ministry of Jesus to the world and to serve in advancing God's kingdom in the earth. It is God's purpose that we not only serve, but that we serve effectively. We are called to make a difference in the world we live in.

Developing the capacity or ability to serve effectively is an on-going process in each believer's life. It takes time to become effective in service. Jesus said in John 15:16, *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit -- fruit that will last."* We are chosen and appointed to bear fruit -- fruit that will last. We are called and gifted to serve -- to serve effectively.

In previous lessons in this course we have defined ministry as serving (See Term 1 - Chapter 15 and Term 3 Chapter 19). Ministry is doing what needs to be done. As we look at the pathway to effective service or ministry in the church and the world we live in, we are concerned first with the attitude of being willing to simply do what needs to be done. We want to be people who are focused on function, not position, people who truly serve in whatever way we can, to do whatever most needs to be done.

The pathway to effective ministry or service has several important steps. In this lesson we will look at Six Steps To Effective Ministry: I. The Call to Effective Service, II. Identification of the Call to Effective Service, III. Equipping for Effective Service, IV. Proving in Effective Service, V. Release into Effective Service, VI. Reproduction of Effective Service.

#### **I. The Call to Effective Service.** *"Many are called but few are chosen."* (Matthew 22:14)

- A. God has a plan for the advancement of His Kingdom in every generation. God knows what He plans to do in every generation. God knows what resources and personnel are needed to accomplish His every purpose: how many, what kind, and where they are needed.
- B. If we are confident that God knows what He is doing and is calling the people needed to accomplish His purpose, then it is important that all of us be attentive to hear God's call for us personally. Chapter 16 of the Term 1 book for this course deals with the importance of hearing God's voice and responding to His call. We must hear, respond, obey, and persevere in service.
- C. In the example of Samuel in "Hearing God's Voice" (Book 1, Chapter 16) the first step was that Samuel was dedicated to the Lord. If we are half-hearted or only partially committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our own lives it will limit our ability to hear God's voice and respond in faith and obedience.
- D. Samuel also remained under authority, served faithfully in practical ways, and allowed the call and gift of God to develop in him as he matured. He did not attempt to step out in his own strength but stayed in a place of submissive service until God affirmed him as ready for leadership responsibility and authority.

## **II. Identification of the Call to Effective Service.**

- A. Many Christians never discover the specific call of God to service because they don't really believe God has a purpose for them. Many Christians don't discover the call of God for their life because they are in an environment where not much encouragement or assistance is provided towards identifying the Call of God. Within the church there are multitudes of frustrated people, and many unfulfilled purposes because of a lack of proper identification of the Call of God.
- B. Often our sense of what a person may be called to do in service for God is too narrow. We may recognize that one may be called to be a preacher or teacher, to serve as a missionary, or to have an active role in Christian meetings or worship services, but we may not recognize a whole range of "callings" and a much greater variety of tasks to which a Christian may be called. Romans Chapter 12 and 1 Corinthians Chapter 12 help us to see something of the variety of callings and their appropriate spiritual gifts. The lessons on Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts in Terms 1 and 2 of this course will help us identify and recognize a much wider range of "callings" and gifts for effective service.
- C. Whatever we may determine our calling and gifts to be, it is important to remain willing to serve in whatever manner will be most helpful to the present need. One danger inherent in the emphasis on identifying our callings and gifts is that a person may begin to feel that they must "specialize" in one aspect of service to the exclusion of all others. It is important that each Christian develop a servant's heart and maintain a willingness to "do what most needs to be done."

## **III. Equipping for Effective Service. (Ephesians 4:11-12)**

*It was he (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

- A. Paul writes to the Ephesian church that one of the key roles and responsibilities for leadership ministries in the church is to equip, to train and prepare Christian believers for effective service so that the purposes of God can be fulfilled and that the church can be "built up" or developed into an effective, functioning body of Christ. This is a departure from traditional leadership roles in which the leaders "did the ministry" and the body of believers were mostly spectators and observers. We must be willing to re-think the roles and responsibilities of leaders in light of what God's word clearly says about the importance of equipping or preparing Christians to serve effectively.
- B. One of the key responsibilities of pastoral leaders is to "*know the sheep...*" (John 10:14) and to help them identify and understand the particular calling of God on their lives. The pastor observes the people, looks for specific talents, skills, interests, and "burdens." The pastor prays for the people and is sensitive to insights that God may give concerning His call for an individual. The pastor then helps the person to understand how the call may be properly responded to and how to gain the necessary training and skills to become effective in service.
- C. Each of the five leadership ministries named in Ephesians 4:11-12 has an important role to

- play in the identification and development of the Call of God in the life of the church and in the lives of the individual members of the body of Christ.
- D. Every Christian believer needs to have access to a proper foundation for faith and service. This is often best provided through a Foundational Training Course (Such as this Foundation for Christian Service Course) that emphasizes systematic foundational teaching on practical areas of life and emphasizes not only knowledge of truth but response to truth. **It's not what you know, it's what you do with what you know.**
- E. The church needs also to provide a range of training opportunities and methods for the variety of ways in which people need to be trained to serve. Specialized training seminars can be part of the answer, but by far the most effective is to be personally discipled and trained by someone who is already functioning effectively in the same area of service that one is called to. The church must become "Training Conscious."

#### **IV. Proving in Effective Service.**

<p><i>They must first be tested (proved); and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve...</i> (1 Timothy 3:10)</p>
---

- A. After one has accepted that God has a special calling for service on his or her life, after that calling has been identified, and after there has been a measure of training or equipping to fulfill the call in practical service, one must be tested or proved competent, responsible, and reliable in service.
- B. An important aspect of one's preparation for effective service is the development and testing of character. One should serve in a subordinate or supportive role alongside a mature and gifted person who will encourage and train but also hold one accountable. One who serves alongside and under the authority of another can be instructed, corrected, and disciplined in order to become fully effective in service. (See Hebrews 12:7-13)
- C. Some of the important qualities that must be developed in one's life in order to be prepared for effective service are:
1. The ability to accept discipline. One must be able to receive correction and accept discipline in order to grow in skill and in character.
  2. The ability to follow through on assignments and responsibilities. If one cannot be trusted to complete assignments and carry out one's responsibilities, then one will not be effective in service at any level. Don't be a "quitter."
  3. To be steady emotionally and spiritually. Life has its ups and downs and all of us are affected by these things. But if one cannot remain steady during "down times" such as times of delay or disappointment, anger or frustration, then one will not be able to be effective in Christian service. One also must be able to remain spiritually steady and not be over-dependent on "spiritual highs." It is good and exciting when one's spiritual experiences are very upbeat, but each Christian will go through seasons of spiritual dryness. One must be able to maintain commitment and responsibility even when one feels very "uninspired."
  4. To be loyal to Christ, to the church, to leaders, and to one's co-workers. One who is "opportunistic," who sees the church merely as a springboard for the fulfillment

of one's own ambitions or desires will become disloyal and will let the team down when the team's best interests and their own perceived best interests are no longer the same.

**V. Release into Effective Service.**

*Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles-- that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. (Mark 3:13-15)*

- A. Jesus set the example of equipping for effective service by His process of calling, teaching, training, and sending. After Jesus had spent a good deal of time with the larger body of His disciples, He called or chose twelve of them to be in closer relationship with Him so that He could train or disciple them in the same things He Himself was doing. He kept them with Him as He ministered so that they could observe. Then He sent them out to do the same things they had observed Him doing. Then He gathered them again and "de-briefed" them. He discussed with them their successes and failures and was able to train them further on the basis of the experiences they had.
- B. The apostle Paul followed the same pattern of teaching, training, and release with Timothy, Titus and others. Paul called Timothy to travel with him, trained Timothy to minister alongside him, and sent Timothy to minister on his behalf. The process of calling, equipping, and testing is not complete until the person can be released into effective ministry.
- C. There should be degrees of release as part of the equipping process for effective service. After one is trained and has proven effective in working with the equipper, then one can be released to serve without supervision. The equipping relationship should be maintained so that one can then report back for further instruction, training, and discipline if necessary. This should be seen as leading up to an eventual "release with relationship," where the person who has been trained is fully released to function but maintains a healthy relationship of counsel and advice with the equipper.
- D. The church must not allow personal ambition, a sense of competition, feelings of being threatened by another's success, or petty conflicts to hinder the process of releasing people into effective service. Each God-called and gifted person must learn to be secure enough in who and what they are in God to encourage, develop, and release others into service. It is a tragedy when people in existing leadership roles hinder and suppress the ministry of younger gifted Christians out of feelings of insecurity.

**VI. Reproduction of Effective Service.**

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who also will be qualified to teach to others. (2 Timothy 2:2)*  
*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)*

- A. One has become fully effective in service when one has reproduced one's gifts and abilities in another. The greatest mark of effective ministry or service is not in how much one has accomplished, but in whether one has developed others so that they can do the same things. We need to be conscious of our limitations, our limited time and strength and

*Foundation for Christian Service copyright © 2000 by Jim and Jean Stephens  
Resource Ministries International [www.resourceministries.org](http://www.resourceministries.org)*

resources, and work diligently at helping others develop in the same skills and abilities that we have developed.

- B. It has been said that, "To be truly successful you must have raised up a successor." What we have built or accomplished will have little lasting impact unless we have raised up others who can carry on the same work both now and after we are gone. It is not so important that our organizations be perpetuated, in fact many organizations are well past their "sell-by" date. But it is important that we reproduce ourselves in others who will carry on the work in other ways, in other places, and in other organizations.
- C. If you are at an early stage in the development process ask God to give you a mature, seasoned person who will help you with the Steps to Effective Service. Submit your self for training, discipline, and development. Trust God to use the discipling relationship to develop you further and more effectively than you would develop on your own. If you are a more mature and developed person, ask God to send you younger God-called Christians that you can assist and develop for Effective Service.
- D. If we are diligent to follow the pattern of the first five Steps to Effective Service, the step of Reproduction of Effective Service will follow as a natural consequence.

### **QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

#### *Chapter 20 Steps to Effective Ministry*

1. What do you feel are the greatest hindrances to this pathway or process of developing Effective Service? What are the greatest hindrances to the younger person who is seeking to be used by God? What are the greatest hindrances to the older more mature person who is in a position to develop others?
2. Do you feel that any one of the Six Steps To Effective Service is most important or is more important than any of the others? Why do you think so?