

EAST LONDON
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST

DISCOVERING MY MINISTRY

EVERY SAINT IS A SERVANT – EVERY MEMBER IS A MINISTER

East London International Church of Christ
Christian Life Application and Service Seminars
CLASS

APRIL 2009

WELCOME TO THE DISCOVERING MY MINISTRY (GIFTS) PROGRAMME

“And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, [growing] into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.” (Ephesians 4:11-16, HSCB)

What part is God calling you to play in building his Church?

Some Christians will find that question easier to answer than others. However, there is definitely an answer for everyone in God's Church and we are about to embark on a journey like never before as we explore how God has uniquely gifted and shaped us to serve in ways that make a difference to the Church and to our community.

Over the years, we have grown in our understanding of what it means to be a healthy Church that honours God. One outcome of this understanding is our desire to train disciples in the work of ministry. The bible makes it clear that we have been given a ministry of reconciliation (*2 Corinthians 5:10-19*). When it comes to fulfilling that purpose as a Church we all bring something different to the table. Praise God for His wisdom! Imagine if we were all the same, what kind of Church would we be?

This programme is in fact more about ministry, unity (not uniformity), and building God's Church, than simply being about spiritual gifts. However, a significant part of ministry and building God's Church is discovering the spiritual gifts that we have been given and learning how to best use them in the Church. That said, in addition to exploring what the bible says about spiritual gifts (S) and their purpose, we will also explore how we can bring together the motivations of our heart (H) i.e. what we enjoy and are motivated to do, our natural abilities (A), our unique personality (P), and our experiences (E), both enjoyable and painful, to be used in ministry. (*This makes up what is called the S.H.A.P.E. Framework*). Bringing these elements together makes us realise that God has been moulding and shaping us for ministry since we were born.

One of the apostle Paul's favourite descriptions of the Church is as a body – the body of Christ. And as a body, if the Church is to be a healthy body, we need work that everyone can do, not just a few. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12, William Barclay (a prominent 20th Century Biblical Scholar) writes, “*there are those who serve the Church in ways that win no publicity, but without whose service the Church could not go on.*” Everyone has something to offer and a significant part to play, probably more than we realise right now. This isn't about having an over-inflated view of ourselves but having a sober [and healthy] view (*Romans 12:3*), a grateful heart for what God has given us and then stewarding those gifts and talents in a way that honours God and inspires our community.

This programme is divided into 3 parts: Living on Purpose, Discovering Your Gifts & Living Your Gifts. Each part of the programme, which involves teaching via Sunday Sermons, Friday classes, as well as handouts for personal and family group use, will aim to answer the following questions respectively:

Part 1 – Living on Purpose: **"Why have we been given gifts/talents and how do they fit into God's purpose for the Church and our lives?"**

Part 2 – Discovering Your Gifts: **"Now that I know why God has given us gifts and their purpose, how do I discover what mine are?"**

Part 3 (Final) – Living Your Gifts: **"Now that I know what my gifts are, or have an idea of what they might be, how do I go about using and developing them to the glory of God, the growth of His Church, and fulfilment of His purpose?"**

In part 3, we will begin to explore how our gifts can be used in different areas of ministry¹ (both existing and new).

We will also introduce and explore the S.H.A.P.E. Framework in more detail during the programme.

Our prayer is that this programme will bring about great empowerment and increased awareness for every disciple as you learn more about the part God is calling you to play in building His Church, as well as a time of greater unity and maturity for the Church as we strive to fulfil God's purpose for us.

Please pray that we do this in a spirit of humility and obedience to God, and that His Holy Spirit guides us as we embark on this journey.

*Leadership Group + Gifts/Ministry Programme Team
East London ICOC, April 2009*

¹ We are convinced that you must first be committed to Christ Jesus as Lord and membership in his church family and committed to the habits for spiritual maturity before you are ready for ministry. Membership and Maturity are the foundation for Ministry.

Part 1 – Living on Purpose

"Why have we been given gifts/talents and how do they fit into God's purpose for the Church and our lives?"

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROGRAMME

...rather serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Galatians 5:13b- 14

There are two categories of neighbour:

- a) Those in the body of Christ
- b) Those who are not in the body of Christ

This programme focuses on ministry service within the body of Christ and will also touch on ministry service (mission) to those who are not in the body of Christ

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Eph.2: 8-10

"(God) he gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelist, 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..." Eph. 4: 11-12

The Bible says:

- * We are God's workmanship and have been created to **do good works**
- * The Leadership are the **administrative ministers**
- * But everyone should be a **minister**
- * Every **saint** is a **servant**

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MINISTRY

We are all called to some kind of ministry. Let's take a look at what the bible says about Ministry.

I. WHAT IS MINISTRY?

Ministry = Service

WHO IS THE GREATEST MINISTER – JESUS

Jesus is the Servant King. We serve a King who serves his subjects...

How does Jesus serve us?

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. Luke 22:27

So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. John 13:4-5

But (Jesus) made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. Philippians 2:7

1. He became one of us
2. He feeds us
3. He leads us
4. He heals us
5. He washes us
6. He trains us
7. He helps us
8. He died for us

The Motivation of Service... Being like Jesus means we too want to be involved in Ministry.

Improper motivations for ministry service

1. Self glorification – Self glorification is temporary and empty. When I glorify God, God will glorify me for eternity
2. Reciprocation – quid pro quo
3. Remuneration – financial gain

We minister in 3 directions

* To the **LORD** (Acts 13:2)

* To **believers** (Heb. 6:10)

* To **non-believers** (Matt. 5:13)

II. JESUS MINISTERED TO 4 AREAS OF NEEDS

WE ALSO MINISTER / SERVE IN THESE 4 AREAS:

* To people's **PHYSICAL** needs.

"(God says) I was hungry and you fed me, ... thirsty and you gave me a drink... needed clothes and you clothed me... sick and you cared for me... in prison and you visited me... Whenever you have done this to the least person, you did it to me." Matt. 25:35-36, 40

* To people's RELATIONAL needs.

"If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and say, 'I repent', forgive him." Luke 17:4

* To people's EMOTIONAL needs.

"... Warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with all." 1 Thess. 5:14 (GN)

* To people's SPIRITUAL needs.

"... God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18

"We proclaim Christ, counselling and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ." Col 1:28, 29

III. THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY

"There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord we are serving. The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church. All of you together are the one Body of Christ and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it."

GOD WANTS TO USE ME TO HELP THE CHURCH GROW

IV. THE PRIORITY OF MINISTRY

1. I've been **CREATED** for ministry!

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Eph. 2:10

2. I've been **SAVED** FOR MINISTRY!

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Eph.2:8-10

3. I've been **CALLED** into ministry!

"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart." 2 Cor.4:1

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Eph. 4:1

A LIFE CHANGING TRUTH - MY PRIMARY IDENTITY: I AM A **SERVANT** OF JESUS CHRIST!

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Cor. 4:5

4. I've been **GIFTED** for ministry!

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

5. I've been **AUTHORIZED** for ministry!

"(Jesus said) All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples..." Matt. 28:18-19

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors..." 2 Cor. 5:20

6. I'm **COMMANDED** to ministry!

"(Jesus) Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve..." Mt. 20:28 (LB)

"(To Archippus) Take heed to the ministry you've received from the Lord and fulfil it." Col. 4:17 (KJV)

7. I'm to be **EQUIPPED** for ministry!

"God gave pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12

8. The body of Christ **NEEDS** my ministry!

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." 1 Cor. 12:27

Ministry usually functions in the context of the Church Family

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said, 'The harvest is great but the workers are few. Ask the Lord to send our workers into his harvest field.'" Matt. 9:36-37

9. I am **ACCOUNTABLE** for my ministry!

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:12

The Parable of the Talents: Matt. 25:14-30

10. I will be **REWARDED** for my ministry!

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward." Col. 3:23, 24

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your Master's happiness!" Matt. 25:23

A PROCEDURE FOR HOW TO DISCOVER MY MINISTRY

(ROMANS 12:1-8)

STEP 1: DEDICATE MY BODY

"I urge you... to offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- which is your spiritual worship." (vs. 1)

STEP 2: ELIMINATE COMPETING DISTRACTIONS

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (vs. 2)

STEP 3: EVALUATE MY STRENGTHS

"Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith God has given to you. (vs.3 Ph)

STEP 4: COOPERATE WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one Body and each member belongs to all the others." (vs. -5)

Implications from Paul's Anatomy Lesson:

(See also 1 Cor. 12:1-31)

- * Every member is a minister in Christ's body.
- * Every member has a different function.
- * Every member's ministry is important.
- * Every member belongs to the others.

"Each of us is a part of the one Body of Christ... The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head cannot say to the feet. 'I don't need you.' And some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary! ... So God put the body together in such a way that extra honour and care are given to those parts that might otherwise seem less important." 1 Cor. 12:13, 21-22, 24b (LB)

STEP 5: ACTIVATE MY GIFTS

"We have different gifts, according to the grace God has given us.. prophesy... serving... teaching... encouraging... contributing... leadership... showing mercy..." Romans 12:6-8