



We are a people where Every Member Ministers

Churches of Christ Sunday, October 2, 2011

**A resource proudly brought to you by
Churches of Christ in Australia**

2011

© 2011 Council of Churches of Christ in Australia

Contents

Introduction - Craig Brown (Churches of Christ in Australia)	Page 5
Every Member Ministry: A Brief History - Kerrie Handasyde (Historical Society)	Page 7
Leading in an Every Member Ministry Context - Alan Hermann (Pine Rivers Church of Christ)	Page 11
Solo Ministry, Mutual Ministry and Sea Change - Simon Clemow (Goolwa Church of Christ)	Page 15
Every Member Ministry in the Multi-Staffed Church - Tania Watson (Lifestreams Christian Church and Executive Minister, Churches of Christ in WA)	Page 19
Bible Studies - Craig Brown (Churches of Christ in Australia)	
1. Who Can Minister in the Church?	Page 25
2. Who is the Church?	Page 27
3. A Model of Ministry	Page 29
4. Finding Your Place	Page 31

Editorial work by: Craig Brown

Production work by: Claire Egan

Blog: www.bit.ly/cofcsunday

Introduction

-- Craig Brown
Federal Coordinator, Churches of Christ in Australia

Churches of Christ Sunday October 2, 2011, on the theme 'Every Member Ministers'

This booklet is a resource to assist in celebrating and exploring this important theme.

Why a Churches of Christ Sunday?

This is not a day that every church in our Movement will take the time to celebrate. However, by designating a Sunday each year to be "Churches of Christ Sunday", we give our churches an opportunity to focus on some of the key themes that make us Churches of Christ. Many in our congregations may not be sure of our values, emphases and characteristics. Aside from that, it is good to remember that we are part of a bigger story.

Our Theme This Year: We are a People Where Every Member Ministers

Churches of Christ can be described as a people where every member ministers. It's part of our DNA and part of our heritage. Negatively put, it could be about a distrust of power structures and hierarchies. Positively put, it is about believing that the Spirit of God moves through the people of God as they minister as the Body of Christ, telling the story of God.

Yet, with this theme there is a tension that every paid minister feels, or has felt at some point. In many of our churches, the people look to the minister for leadership and, at times, seem to abdicate ministry to the minister. In darker moments, some of our paid ministers may feel that their congregation pays them so that the congregation can be exempt from certain ministry tasks.

When a congregation has the blessing of a competent, energetic and visionary pastor/leader, the flip side may be that the congregation feels disenfranchised from ministry: *Thus we have found it so hard to determine the difference between the church in action and the minister in action* (E P C Hollard, **The Potency of the Pew**, 1956).

Despite these tensions – and maybe because of them - every member ministry is a concept we need to wrestle with. It is my hope that this resource will help promote discussion of some crucial concepts:

- How do we encourage and develop leadership in the context of every member ministry?
- What does leadership look like in our churches? What biblical models can we follow?
- How do we encourage every member ministry within our churches? What are the hurdles we face in doing this?

We would all agree that the healthiest churches in our Movement are the ones in which a high percentage of members/attendees are released to serve. Being a people where every member ministers is a vital component of who we are, and a part of our DNA that creates healthy churches which transform the communities around them.

Every Member Ministry: A Brief History

-- Kerrie Handasyde
Historian, Australian Churches of Christ Historical
Society and Vic/Tas Conference

Churches of Christ in Australia endeavour to practice every member ministry. We believe that together as part of the Body of Christ we communicate with God on behalf of others and we minister to all the earth on behalf of God. So how have we understood and enacted this ideal over time?

One of Churches of Christ's foundational thinkers, Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), affirmed the New Testament statement that all are called to preach, teach and baptise. But he believed that, in practice, the orderly functioning of a church required a more structured approach.

Interpreting the New Testament for the 19th century, he advised that the church should have three orders of ministry. Elders looked after the church's spiritual and pastoral direction by preaching, teaching, presiding over the Lord's Supper and keeping everyone on the straight and narrow. Deacons were the servants of the church who ensured its proper functioning. Evangelists (preachers) were "sent out into the world" to convert people and start new churches for elders to lead. Campbell believed that, in unusual circumstances, any Christian may minister, but that within the church we give over that privilege to the elders - a small group of older-aged men, governed by a lead elder and appointed for life. Campbell asks "Can any person point out an imperfection in this plan?!"

It's a tempting invitation, but we don't need to point out the problems because history has done it for us - lack of inclusiveness, potential for organisational and spiritual stagnation, and a practical suppression of every member ministry. These are the reasons we now share ministry among many people for shorter periods of time and welcome educated preachers into churches.

When Churches of Christ established in Australia in the mid-1800s we shared the preaching and teaching among the elders and particularly

able men in the congregation in a practice known as 'mutual exhortation'. Effectively, each Sunday morning a number of laymen had a turn at advising, admonishing and encouraging the gathered faithful. Does that sound like every member ministry? That was the intention, but the human desire for importance meant it promoted rivalry among the men (and excluded women). One evangelist claimed that 'mutual exhortation' "fostered individuality and self-assertion" and was a "reign of ignorance" which hampered evangelistic efforts! There was truth in the criticisms and we looked for alternative ways to practice ministry. Rosters were established with one lay speaker per week. This allayed the competition for the lectern but it didn't improve the effectiveness of our churches' ministry to the world.

***Do you wonder
whose gifts for
ministry are
suppressed today?***

Towards the turn of the 20th century, the evangelists, who'd been so successful in bringing people to Christ, began to be employed to preach within the churches. Our congregations grew and so did the demand for more educated speakers. In 1907, we established the College of the Bible (now CCTC) to train preachers and missionaries. For believers in every member ministry, this was concerning. They worried that education would create a 'clergy' or a spiritual hierarchy and diminish the importance of lay ministry. However, significant areas of ministry remained in the hands of the people: our central weekly sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a great deal of pastoral care and visitation, charitable works and a healthy ongoing tradition of lay preaching. We also never set paid ministers apart with titles like 'Reverend'. Education, however, did not damage every member ministry. It enhanced the abilities of some – and greatly increased the inclusion of women who were accepted as students at the College (from 1912) for Foreign Missions Training. Our willingness to have women minister to people overseas but not to our own men speaks of the colonialism and chauvinism of the time, but the missionary service of women (such as Mary Thompson, Australian Churches of Christ's first missionary, India 1891-1934) helped the formal recognition of women in ministry.

Women's ministry was also undertaken in local settings. In the 1880s, Nettie Thurgood began a Young Ladies' Society where the women prayed, stitched clothes for charity and picked flowers for the local orphanage. Nettie then began Women's Conference, which raised money for aid and foreign missions and encouraged all women in every church to form themselves into groups for Bible study, prayer and charitable works. There were no organisational limits to participation. Women's ministry was truly a ministry of service in the church and beyond, open to every woman member. But until the mid-20th century, women's ministry was seen as ministry by and for women and did not commonly extend to eldership or preaching.

In 1941 ordination was introduced in Churches of Christ in Australia, signifying that gifted and educated preachers do not 'belong' to any one congregation (as elders and deacons do) but to the whole church. Miss Alice Barton was our first woman to be ordained - alongside her soon-to-be husband, Mr Saunders. But it was 1946 and Alice found that she was most often treated not as a minister, but as the minister's wife. With hindsight we see how social pressures within congregations have had the power to limit gifts for ministry, both lay and ordained, despite Churches of Christ's professed belief in every member ministry. It makes you wonder whose gifts for ministry are suppressed today.

Over two hundred years we have consistently acknowledged the importance of participation in doing God's work in the church and the world. At the same time we have found reasons to limit how this might be practiced. The practicalities of running a church, entrenched social cultures and the all-too-human desire for individual importance have each played a part. Our history challenges us to identify and overcome the current manifestations of these organisational, social and personal limits – because every member ministry is at the core of Churches of Christ.

Leading in an Every Member Ministry Context

-- Alan Hermann
Senior Minister, Pine Rivers Church of Christ

I have always believed that my primary goal as a minister is to make myself superfluous by releasing the abilities of the church community. It takes time, but after 12 years at Pine Rivers Church of Christ, I have just about accomplished being superfluous, and so am happy to retire. I believe that as a minister I need to model ministry more than just speak about ministry. My primary role is not to serve church members but to empower them to serve the community. I lead through and with, not on behalf of or for.

I leave a church where most people are involved in ministry and enjoying being used by God. So how did this happen?

It began with a deep belief in a relational, rather than task oriented, approach to every aspect of ministry. It meant creating a mission statement that was relational, that was real and that people knew, believed and lived. Too often mission statements are simply words.

We came up with this:

Pine Rivers Church of Christ exists to help people to:

- **Know** God personally as Saviour, Father and Lord;
- **Grow** as Christians in relationship with God and each other, and
- **Go** together in love to share this relationship with others.

Almost every person in the church knows why we are here, what we are on about, and takes it seriously.

This relational approach means the focus is on people not roles. It is a bubble up not top down approach. Rather than trying to fill pre-determined ministry roles with people, we help people dream and prayerfully discover what they believe God wants to do through them. This releases people to be God's voice, heart and hands. If no one feels

called to a particular ministry, we drop the ministry no matter how important we feel it is: no ministry is sacred.

We encourage people to dream, to share their dreams and release them to implement their dreams. We give them permission, training and resources to try, and then support them when they step out. We mould ministry around the interests and abilities of our people and match them with the needs of the community. I have found that I am basically a 'permission giver' and 'back coverer' to people living the dream/mission God has given them, as leadership works to protect the people from criticism and take the fall for them.

Rather than saying 'the church should do this', people ask 'can I do this'?

Every member ministry is a totally different paradigm to the norm, not something that can be added on to an existing approach. It will mean a 'messy' church. It will mean that as senior pastor I won't always know about everything that is happening. It helps facilitate a church where the whole ethos is that we are here for the unchurched, where we constantly ask ourselves: 'In what ways are the local community richer materially, emotionally, relationally or spiritually because we are here?' There is a cost involved. It may mean that some Christians who move into the area will prefer a neater, possibly more 'churchy' church. I am much more concerned about neglecting non-Christians who, if they leave, will probably go nowhere.

We should preach and teach every member ministry any way we can: utilise the church paper, write or find small group studies, e-mail regular thoughts and articles, provide books, DVDs, YouTube talks from those who emphasise every member ministry like Shane Claiborne, Brennan Manning and Dave Andrews (to name a few). For us, this continues to be effective as people constantly come to me with new ministry ideas they feel led to implement.

An emphasis on every member ministry produces a different way of thinking: rather than saying 'the church should do this', people ask 'can I do this'? As a result of this, new ministries begin on a regular basis. The congregation now initiates almost all the ministries in the church. Over

time, the emphasis of ministry shifts from the congregation to the surrounding community. When people become Christians they are baptised by the person whose ministry led them to the Lord, rather than by me.

Based on intentionally building a self-image within people as the beloved of God, every member ministry encourages channelling God's grace to others. This grows a desire to be used by God. This is the approach as modelled by Jesus and stated by Paul in **Ephesians 4:11,12**. *It was he 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...* My focus, then, is on "transforming" others to help each other, to care for one another, to be encouraging and harmonious, and to look out for the organisation as a whole. I attempt to enhance the motivation, morale and performance of church attenders - not just members, as we treat membership lightly and attempt to involve everyone in mission. Be prepared to pay the cost. It is a hundred times worth it.

I leave a growing, excited church. I wonder if they will notice I'm gone?

Solo Ministry, Mutual Ministry and Sea Change

-- Simon Clemow
Minister, Goolwa Church of Christ, SA

In most of our congregations, whether a church has an ordained minister(s) or is led by a team of Elders, each person can, with the freedom that our autonomy allows, exercise their God given, Spirit infused gifts as they feel called and led. This is part of who we are as Churches of Christ.

Yet I suspect that our call, our custom, and our firm belief in the priesthood of all believers (every member ministry) is at the same time one of our greatest points of appeal, but also one of our greatest points of concern to those who are not members of our tradition.

Let me explain.

I am on the journey, as the solo paid minister in a small, rural, 108 year old 'sea change' church. One of the greatest blessings this context is that at least half of the 50 or so congregation members are actively involved in the ministry of the church – from presiding over the service, to worship leading, Bible reading, church prayers, music, singing, church cleaning, preparing communion elements, sound desk, data projector, welcoming at the door, preparing and cleaning up morning tea, mowing lawns, Elders, Deacons – and these are just the activities inside the church building! Beyond that there is involvement in breakfast club, kids club, Christian Option in schools, leading worship at aged care facilities, community service groups etc. And as their minister, it is my privilege for the season to be involved – at some level – in each of these activities.

What this means though, is that our roster or worship plan is a serious looking document. For most, this is the just the way it is done, for others the bi-monthly array of columns and rows of names and dates, overwhelm and perhaps trigger worrying memories of calculus class in high school. However, for those who are checking us out in their search

for a faith community, the expanse of the roster versus the size of the worshipping community can be a cause for concern.

One of the distinguishing features of the sea change phenomena¹ is that people (Warning! Massively broad-brush stroke statement ahead!) are largely not only retiring from their working lives when they move to the coast, but they are also retiring from their church life as well. While maintaining a self-evident sense of the spirit and the divine in the liminal space which coastal communities inhabit, they shy away from church involvement largely due to the expectations that once part of a community again, the worship place and roster will claim them and chain them in perpetuity.

There seemed a decrease in the number of people prepared to serve voluntarily when 'we can pay someone to do it for us.'

As a student minister, I was fortunate enough to serve with some larger Churches of Christ congregations. It seemed as the number of paid ministers/staff increased, there also seemed to be a decrease in the number of people prepared to serve voluntarily, especially when 'we can pay someone to do it for us.' This allowed people the freedom to come and go as they pleased, but also seemed to disenfranchise and disconnect them from the community, and how it functioned.

There seems to be a misunderstanding that the priesthood of all believers is based upon your annual budget, or your pulse rate, your general health and your availability – rather than upon a gifting of the Spirit, and a call from God. I am not sure where, or when, or how this idea got going – because to me, the blessing of mutual ministry is that it brings variety in worship, solidarity in service, and community in our call as witnesses to the world. However, to a world which is largely

¹ Wendy Snook "The Gospel and Sea Change/Tree Change Cultures" in *Reimagining God and Mission* – Ross Langmead – Editor (2007, ATF Press, Adelaide SA) pp179-198

"Sea change migration appears to be an Australian term, used to describe the movement of the population from metropolitan to Arcadian Australia with the implicit hope of complete transformation brought about by the sea." p 179

embracing its own *McDonaldisation*² - the call to individual expression in worship and service in the community can be unsettling, yet a blessing when we remember the central feature of the priesthood of all believers is in the Open Table:

Our open table also says that one need not be ordained to serve from it. One need not be ordained to utter the words of Jesus that instituted the celebration. One need not be ordained, or licensed – or for that matter even very nice – to serve from a plate or tray holding the bread, or a chalice or a tray holding little plastic (glass) cups containing the fruit of the vine. As the priesthood of all believers, we need only understand that we are bound to each other through Christ, and that we are bound to Christ with each other. So, we are bound to the sinners and the saints. We are bound to the hungry and to the self-indulgent, to the creditor and the debtor, to the oppressed and the oppressor, to the stingy and the generous. Our open table means we are part of each other, that we need each other, just as we need Jesus.³

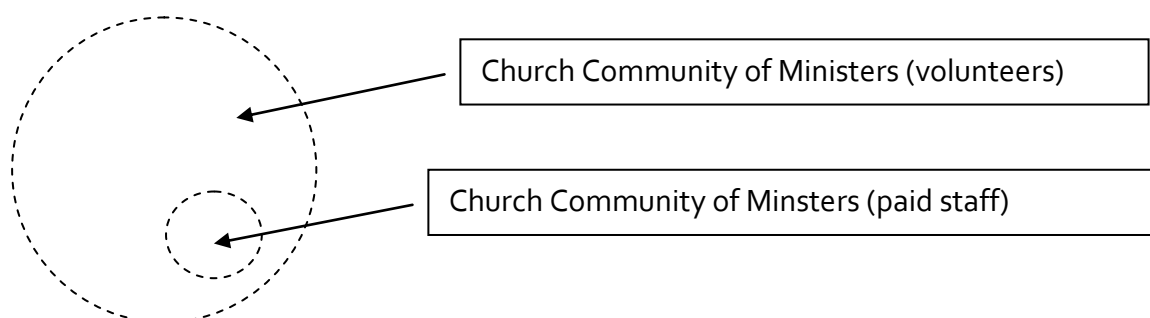
² Term first coined by George Ritzer in *The McDonaldisation of Society* (Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks CA: 1993) and then used as a thesis base for John Drane's *The McDonaldisation of the Church – Consumer Culture and the Church's Future* (Smyth & Helwys Publishing Macon, GA: 2001) which 'defines McDonaldisation as the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant [homogenisation, rationalisation, production line methodology, simplification of process and idea, lowest common denominator wins, maximising profits at the expense of people et al.] are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world.' p 32

³ Amy Lignitz Harken "Things We Surely Believe" in *One Church – A Bicentennial Celebration of Thomas Campbell's Declaration & Address* – Carson, Foster, & Holloway Eds (2008, Leafwood Publishers, Abilene, TX) pp74-75

Every Member Ministry in the Multi-Staffed Church

-- Tania Watson

Executive Minister, Lifestreams Christian Church, WA
Executive Minister, Churches of Christ in WA



First things first, we need to set the scene! How should the staff of a church view themselves? I believe that they must understand themselves to be co-workers with all of the people who are followers of Jesus, worshipping together in community. Together, we share in the responsibility to fulfil Christ's mandate: to go and make disciples. Paul writes clearly about how we ought to perceive ourselves in passages like 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.

The constant challenge for the ministry staff of a church is to keep the big picture of the Body of Christ in mind. There are many subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which ministry staff can get caught up in doing the work of the saints on behalf of the saints, or even taking on responsibility for the saints rather than enabling the saints to carry out their own God-given responsibilities!

This challenge is magnified the larger a church staff becomes, especially where there is a stable multi-staffed ministry team growing in spiritual and ministry leadership maturity. There will always be reasons why the staff can do what needs to be done. It's a discipline to keep asking the question: "How do we grow and involve our church in this area?"

Involving, equipping and releasing God's people to do God's work is not the easy pathway for leaders. Much tension and conflict in the church results when leaders do not involve others. Unity and involvement is not quick, and neither is it easy. Unity and involvement demand that we relate to one another and that we relate well! The church ought not to be characterised by bitterness and power struggles.

Jesus paints a compelling vision for the Church in John 17. As a young pastor, I was gripped by the vision that church could be a place of unity and vibrant life. Less than a year into my first ministry role I began to wonder if John 17 was nothing more than a Christian utopian dream.

A Gospel which speaks about inclusion, not exclusion.

Involving all of the volunteers in decision making and fostering relationships in the process was just downright painful.

I was working with a group of volunteer leaders seeking to shape a ministry that would reflect the vision and mission of our church. The more we met and talked, the more discouraged I became. Around the table of each meeting was such a diversity of views and opinions shaped by individual experiences, theologies and worldviews. No matter what way I looked at the situation, all I could see was that I was locked into a game of winners and losers. Still, my heart yearned for unity: surely the church was the one community in the world that could make decisions together without people finding themselves marginalised and hurt in the process?

The usual route in situations like these is to find consensus through compromise, or for some people to give up and lose. My heart, however, could not settle for what seemed to me to be second best for our church.

Experiencing this kind of tension as a leader is, I believe, a gift from God. It is a tension that reminds us to pray and reflect in the Word – to seek God for what we cannot do ourselves. And so it was that I discovered the "Umbrella of Grace", a decision making tool that enables the Body of Christ to make decisions together so that there are no winners or losers.

The umbrella of grace became a gift in a particular leadership role, but since then I have valued it as a key tool that is useful in any situation

where there are groups of people seeking to work together. The umbrella of grace comes into play when people on a multi-staff team are trying to find ways to work together or align their ministry activities. It comes into play when ministry staff are seeking to get on the same page with a Board of Elders. It comes into play when ministry staff are seeking to work with volunteers in shaping ministry direction and strategy.

So what is the umbrella of grace and how does it work?

The process starts by plotting a straight line along which every person (including the "leader") in the room is encouraged to mentally (this is not the place for people to feel unsafe or marginalised because of their view) place their personal opinion, preference, and values on the line.

For example, a team made up of a ministry leader and volunteers is sitting around a table discussing the shape of their children's ministry. "Should kids be in church for the first part of the service, or should they have children's ministry for the whole service time?"

In most churches asking this question would result in a line that looks something like this:

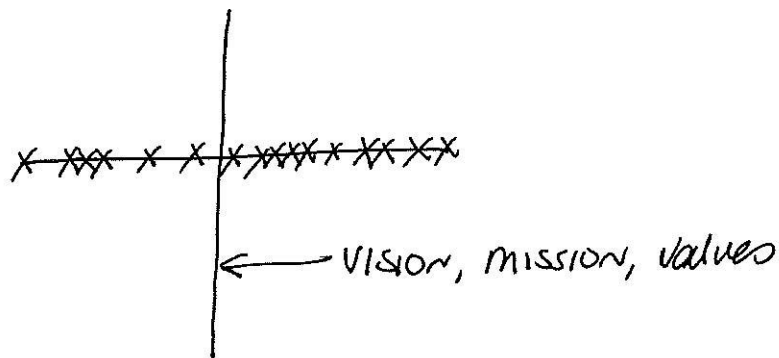


There are a few things to notice about this line:

- The line represents the spectrum of views from (sometimes) one extreme to the other. It's useful to talk about what the extreme views are at each end of the line without attaching particular names of people to each view.
- Usually, when groups of people are making decisions, they tend to make decisions around the view expressed by the majority of people. However, this always results in winners and losers. Decisions made like this always mean that someone is marginalised which is antithetical to a Gospel which speaks about inclusion, not exclusion.

So how can a group make a decision that honours everyone (including God!)?

The answer lies in placing a second line that intersects with the first.



This line represents the particular vision, mission and values of the church. This line expects that Christ-like servant leaders within the church have sought God's insight into how they, and the people God has entrusted to them to lead, carry out the Gospel mandate within their sphere of influence.

Because of what this line represents, the question facing a group of people changes from being a personal question to being a corporate question: from being "What is best for me and mine?" to "What is best for ours?"

Our original question changes: "How do our vision, mission and values help us to determine what is best for the children who are a part of our church?"

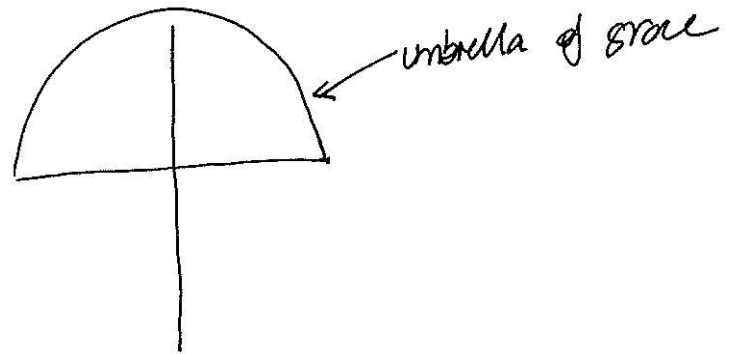
This change of perspective enables people to put aside their personal opinions and focus instead on what is shared between them. For a person to argue against an agreed vision, mission or value, is to bring into question one's own place in the church community. Ultimately if one does not agree with the vision, mission and values of a church then one is faced with answering some personal questions. "Why am I a part of this church? What do I believe? What do I value? How does what I believe and value align with the beliefs and values of this church?"

Engaging in this exercise does require spiritual maturity in a ministry leader. There may be great insights that come from an exercise that may challenge the prevailing vision, mission and values of a church. There may be people who need time to wrestle with their own beliefs and

values...and they may, as a result, make decisions about staying or leaving.

This is why the final piece of this diagram includes a covering of grace. This covering says, "Within this community, we agree to reflect Christ to one another."

At the end of the day, even I, as the ministry leader, may not personally agree with the decision made by all of us together. But because of my commitment to being a part of a church community, because



of my commitment to embrace the vision, mission and values that Christ has given to us, I will submit to the prayerful, Word informed, discernment of God's people. In actuality, because this process must include prayer and because it must include reflections from the Word...there's never been a decision made that I could not embrace with my whole heart. In fact, there's never been a decision that I and a team of people have made that we haven't been able to embrace.

Under the umbrella of grace we discover that we can live and serve together in unity whilst appreciating and valuing our diversity of gifts, views, experiences and values.

Who Can Minister in the Church?

Bible Study One

Key Verse: *It was he 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... (Eph 4:11,12)*

Passage: Ephesians 4:7-16

Quotable quote: *"For the pioneers, the New Testament teaching on ministry was clear. Each Christian was a minister, rendering that service to Christ for which God has given him the ability. This concept came to be called the 'mutual ministry' where each played his part in the service to the whole."* [Gordon Stirling, **An Ongoing Christian Movement**, November 1968]

Warm Up Questions:

1. When you think of when you hear the phrase, "ministry in the church"? *Who* or *what* do you think of?
2. Gordon Stirling states that 'each Christian is a minister'. How do you respond to that comment?
3. How do you think that would work in your church?

Exploring the Text:

This passage has often been used in terms of explaining the 'five fold' pattern of ministry. In particular, it has been used to show that there are other options in Christian leadership other than the model of pastor/teacher.

4. As you read this passage, what do you think the role of leaders is in the church?
5. What do you think the role of the congregation is, based on this reading?
6. What is the aim of ministry based on verses 12-13 and 16?
7. Is this anything in this passage that limits ministry to a certain group of people?

8. What do you think this passage is saying about ministry styles and emphases?

Wrestling in the Word: What is the ministry you have in your church community? This is a crucial question to wrestle with, especially as every member ministry is so much a part of Churches of Christ. If you don't have a ministry, can you articulate why? Is it because you have thought that ministry is all about what happens at the 'front' on a Sunday morning? Where do your gifts lie?

A Closing Thought: What's preventing you exercising your ministry? You might be in a difficult season, a time that requires you being ministered to rather than to be actively ministering. But if that's not the case, jot down what is stopping you, and then go and share it with someone from your church community.

Who is the Church?

Bible Study Two

Key Verse: *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)*

Passage: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-30

Quotable Quote: "As the line of worshippers pass through the doors there goes the church of Jesus... What will be its impact? How much of their world will have changed in a week before they come back again?" [E P C Hollard *The Potency of the Pew, 1956*]

Warm Up Questions:

1. Hollard makes the point that the church leaves the church building every Sunday. Do you think the way we talk or think about 'church' reflects that idea?
2. When you leave the church service, do you sense that you are going out as the *body of Christ*, to change part of your world? Why or why not?
3. What do you think the apostle Paul means by the phrase *the body of Christ*?

Exploring the Text:

The Corinthian church was no picnic. It suffered from divisions, factions, a tendency to favour the spectacular over the Christ-like, moral failings and an over emphasis on some spiritual gifts to the detriment of others. Yet Paul has no qualms about calling it *the body of Christ*.

4. Keeping in mind this crucial metaphor of the body, try to list as many things as you can from the Gospel of Mark that Christ did in his body. What does that mean for the church? For you?
5. In terms of thinking about ministry, read vv12-20. What is Paul saying here?
6. *But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be (v18).* Does this give you any confidence that you have a role to play in the body of Christ?

7. Do you sometimes look at others and feel that what they do is ministry, and that what you do is lesser? How does that feeling fit in this passage? Read vv21-26 in particular.
8. In v31, what do you think that Paul means by *eagerly desire the greater gifts*? What do you think the purpose of 'greater gifts' would be?

Wrestling with the Word: What gifts of the Spirit can you identify in this passage? Do you think it is an exhaustive list? Can you find a description in all of this that fits your gifts, or gifts you would want to know more about?

A Final Thought: If you read through any of the Gospels, you will get an idea of what Christ did when in his earthly body: healings, exorcisms, acts of compassion, proclamation and announcement, loving the marginalised and poor, prayer, miracles and connecting people to their Father in heaven. What aspect of his ministry most draws you – and can you act it through the body of Christ?

A Model of Ministry

Bible Study Three

Key Verse: *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. (Luke 10:1-2)*

Passage: Luke 10:1-24

Quotable Quote: *"All the members had some share in the organisation. The 'priesthood of all believers' is Scriptural in that in the New Testament there was no priestly class, no Mediator between God and humanity other than Jesus Christ. There is nothing in the New Testament to prevent a qualified person from preaching and administering the ordinances." (R T Pittman, **Congregationalism in the New Testament**, 1956)*

Warm Up Questions:

1. What do you think a 'qualified person' means when it comes to ministry? Is it only those in paid ministry?
2. Many churches state that they have many 'ministers', but only one Pastor. If this is the case, what do you see the role of paid leaders being in the church?
3. How do you see every member ministry ('the priesthood of all believers') operating in your church community?

Exploring the Text: Luke 10 follows hard on the heels of Jesus beginning his long journey to Jerusalem. The bulk of his discipleship teaching occurs in this section. As we look at Luke 10, we do well to pause and consider two key points: *what discipleship lessons can we learn from this? What form of leadership is Jesus modelling?*

4. Jesus sends out seventy-two workers. Why do you think he is doing this? Is there any relevance to the church today?
5. Where is your church's harvest field? Who are your workers? (v2)

6. What is the message that Jesus gives the workers? What do you think he means by the kingdom of God (vv9-11)
7. In reading this passage, what scope of ministry is going on?
8. Read v16. What does this verse tell you about our role in the kingdom?

Wrestling with the Word: There is a great breadth of what seems to be going on in Luke 10. On one hand, we have the seventy-two rejoicing over demons submitting to them in the name of Jesus (v17), and on the other hand we have a wonderful image of members of the seventy-two blessing a household and staying there, forming relationships and speaking of the nearness of the kingdom. Does this encourage or daunt you in terms of ministry?

A Final Thought: Jesus in Luke 10 is a sender, highlighting areas of needs and suggesting ways of ministering, as well as equipping the workers. What do you think the role of leadership is in the church, as you reflect on this passage?

Finding Your Place

Bible Study Four

Key Verse: *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 (Romans 12:4-5)*

Passage: Romans 12:1-8

Quotable Quote: *"Is the emphasis at your church on recruiting and finding a person to fill every slot or on the notion that every person has a mission and we need to help them discover it?" (Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, **On the Verge**, 2011)*

Warm Up Questions:

1. Have you ever felt that there was a slot on a roster or an opening in a ministry that you were being asked to fill, regardless of your gifts, skills and personality? How did that make you feel?
2. What do you think your mission is?
3. How would you like someone to help you discover that mission, and begin to enact it?

Exploring the Text: Romans 12 (in very simplistic terms) begins Paul's 'practical' application of Romans 1-11. His starting point is the incredible mercy of God (v1), and our response to that, both in terms of service (v2) and ethics (v3). The mercy of God towards us is the grid through which we should read this passage.

4. Dwell on God's mercy as shown through Jesus.
5. What do you think an appropriate response to Jesus' mercy for us is?
6. Paul urges us in 12:2 to not *conform any longer to the pattern of this world...* What patterns of the world could interfere with our participation in every member ministry?
7. What does it mean to 'belong to each other' (v5)? How do we understand this in terms of the gifts that we have, and how we are to use them?

8. Do you know your gifts? Your passions? Your skills? If not, how can you discover them? If so, what is Paul's advice to you?

Wrestling with the Word: Dwell on Romans 12:1,2. Do you have any attitudes that need renewing that may be blocking your view of service in every member ministry?

A Final Thought: You are gifted. You are a recipient of mercy, of an overwhelming mercy. You are part of a body that has many gifts, each belonging to the other. What is your response to this?

Notes

Other Resources

From the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia

The Journey of Baptism

A new Booklet for those considering baptism.

Available in electronic PDF format.

Asking the Unasked Questions

A Booklet that encourages creating healthy church environments for youth leaders to thrive in.

Available in electronic PDF format.

The D&A is part of our DNA

A Booklet examining and celebrating the origins and key themes of Churches of Christ.

Available in electronic PDF format.

We are a people of The Open Table

A Booklet exploring the radical and gentle nature of our approach to celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Available in electronic PDF format.

These resources are also available in hard copy format but a small postage and handling fee may apply.

**Contact Craig Brown on 03 9488 8800 or
cbrown@churchesofchrist.org.au to
request any of these helpful resources.**



A Churches of Christ in Australia Resource

Phone 03 9488 8800
1st Floor, Heidelberg Rd
Fairfield VIC 3078
www.cofcaustralia.org