

The Sermon - In 10 Sentences Or Less

Ancient Future Church (Week 3) - Equipped to Minister



1. Ephesians 4.11-13 is a key text in the New Testament about role differentiation in church, and because it occurs in a 'circular letter,' we know that its pattern was meant to be employed by all the churches who read it.

2. Here are the two roles described, restated in the language of the text itself: congregational leaders are to equip, and the congregation is to do the work of the ministry and build up the body of Christ.

3. The verb "equip" in 1st-century Greek connotes two things - leaders are to bring congregants one step closer to completion, and are to prepare the church for the future that lies ahead.

4. Leaders do this by asking questions for which there are no current solutions or the present answers no longer apply, work to see what's lacking or missing and then address it, put sequential steps or a growth path in place for all congregants, etc.

5. Two metaphors for this type of leadership from modern organizational research are a) the leader as coach, and b) the leader as multiplier (see below for quotes about both).

6. Every Christian can do God's work in the world: this was a revolutionary idea in 1st-century world, in which only a small elite group could be priests, and then again during the Protestant Reformation (see 1st Peter 2.9).

7. In order to function as a priest and to do the work of God's ministry, every Christian must be equipped; being equipped by leaders is essential, not optional.

8. Figuring out the particular or specific way that God wants you to do His work or function as a priest is one of the great movements of your spiritual life (see below for a set of reflection questions to help you with that).

9. Never forget - the very first generation of Christians in the New Testament had very few formally-trained leaders, but lots of equipped, committed laypersons...and they changed the world.

Leadership Quotes to Consider

"I absolutely believe that people, unless coached, never reach their maximum potential. The best quality in a coach is to ask a lot of questions and let the person come up with the answers. A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has to see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you've always wanted to be." (Rick Conlow, leadership consultant)

"Leaders rooted in the logic of multiplication believe: 1. Most people in an organization are underutilized; and, 2. Everyone in an organization can thrive with just a little investment from its leaders. Poor leaders jump in and out of situations unpredictably; the Multiplier coaches and empowers, entrusting others with full ownership and accountability. Poor leaders make decisions and try to force them on others; the Multiplier raises hard questions to the group so it can find and buy into its own solutions." (Liz Wiseman, in her book "Multipliers")

Questions Upon Which to Reflect

So where and how does God want you to be His priest, do His ministry work, and build up the body of Christ? (Those last two phrases are pulled directly out of Eph. 4.11-13)...

Spend some time this week reflecting on or journaling about the following questions...they're meant to help you get a sense of your place in God's wider Kingdom work. (These also make for a dynamite small group or Sunday School discussion.)

1. What about the Christian life or church ministry really animates, energizes, or motivates you?
2. What social causes move you or are you passionate about?
3. Consider this quote: ""Your calling in life is where your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need" (Frederich Buechner). How does it help you specify your responses to #1 and #2 above?
4. When have you felt like you really made a difference in someone's life, when God was acting through you, or when you and God were very close while you went about His work?
5. When have others told you that you were good at some specific kind of ministry or endeavor, or that God really touched or blessed them through you?
6. Your responses to the first five questions now make you ready for the last: How can you prioritize following your calling more, how do you need to be equipped or trained in order to do so, and what do you need to stop doing in order to free up more time for your calling?

If you'd like to follow up with me (Pastor Chris) about this exercise, or what it might reveal to you about your role here at KW or how we can help "equip" you, reach out to me - pastorchriskwpc@gmail.com.

Prayer for the Week

“Toward a clearer vision of the work You have set before us, Lord, guide us. Toward a greater commitment to Your service and greater love for all Your children, Lord lead us. Toward a growing sense of spiritual urgency and engagement, Lord provoke us. And toward Your wide, faithful, enduring grace, Lord point us, amen.” (The Church of India)