

## Legitimate Christian Ministry

The biblical concept of ministry is service rendered to God or to His people. Ministry in the church has for its goal the edification of individuals with a view towards corporate maturity in Christ (Eph. 4:7-16).

The concept of ministry as service is based in the words diakoneo ("to serve") and douleuo ("serve as a slave") and their corresponding nouns. The word hyperetes indicates one who gives willing service to another person, that is, as servants of the "word" (Luke 1:2), of Christ (John 18:36; Acts 26:16; I Cor. 4:1), and of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5).

The word leitourgia and its corresponding verb, leitourgeo, often refer to the priestly service during the Old Testament era. They are used figuratively in the New Testament to indicate financial "ministry" (Romans 15:27; II Cor. 9:12) and the pouring out of Paul's life sacrificially in his ministry (Phil. 2:17).

Types of ministries seen in Scripture include the service of priests and Levites in the Old Testament, of apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers in the NT, along with the general ministry of elders and the individual mutual ministries of all believers. The term "ministry" therefore refers to the work both of those commissioned to leadership and of the whole body of believers.

The ideals of ministry are portrayed in the perfect servant hood of the humanity of Christ. Acts 6:3 provides guidelines as to the spiritual qualities sought in leaders, and (I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:6-9) specify the necessary qualities in greater detail. The spiritual qualification is much greater than the responsibility.

There is a considerable difference of opinion regarding the historical development of a ministry in the New Testament early church. Many have seen a development from a simple independent ministry, exercised by every Christian in an individual way, to an organized or "official" ministry restricted to a few, ultimately issuing in the institutional ministry (monarchial-episcopate) in the post-apostolic period.

From time to time in the history of the church and again in recent times various groups have emphasized the independent types of ministries. Most recently, concepts of a ministry have been modified by such diverse movements as the workers, the stress on lay leadership, the development of multiple church staffs, modern social ministries, and the mass ordination of pastors by various religious organizations.

It is far from certain, however, that the New Testament early church experienced a rapid development from independent to institutional ministry, and even less plausible that there was a direct opposite in the early church between these two forms of ministry. It is true that there is little indication in most of Paul's letters regarding an institutional ministry wherein elders and deacons are mentioned mainly in the Epistles.

The mention in Philippians 1:1 of elders and deacons refers to the acts of the apostle Paul in ordaining elders in every local church. Also the passages in the Epistles concerning elders and deacons stressed their character and function, not their "office" (1 Timothy 3:10-13). Furthermore, the specific function exercised by elders, deacons, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers is never set over against, or intended to bypass, the ministries of the individual Spirit-gifted believers.

There are a number of additional issues surrounding the theology of ministries which include:

- The prerequisite divine call to the ministry other than the general commands of the Lord Jesus Christ and the recognition of the local church of that personal call. Majority of the pastors are not actually called and not God sent from God but by someone else.
- Second: The restriction that disallowed women from taking the role of pastor-teacher and evangelist. Women pastors are all liars and not from God.
- Third: The questionable lifestyle that precludes the life in the ministry.
- Fourth: The honor and authority that accrue to the ministers of Christ above those which belongs to the faithful followers of the Lord (1 Tim. 3:13).

A dual view of ministry, that all believers were to exercise a ministry in accordance with their spiritual gift, but that authoritative teaching, leadership, and discipline were limited to a recognized body of elders, paves the way for an answer to the above issues.

Paul restricted women from authoritative teaching positions, (I Tim. 2:12), but the universal testimony of both the Old and New Testament is that they exercised a variety of significant ministries. There are some significant instances also of women leaders in the early church.

Whether Paul's restrictions were intended to apply beyond the time when the Canon of the Bible was completed and when all ministries were more regulated is open to question. Ministry, by whatever persons and in whatever form, is essentially a continuation of the servant ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christianity, it is largely a ministry of the Word of God. The purpose of the ministry is the edification (growth toward spiritual maturity) of the church through the systematic, progressive and diligent intake of the Bible doctrine.

Important general principles related to legitimate Christian ministry:

- God uses regenerate believers to accomplish His divine purpose and plan for the Church.
- The unbelievers have no part in the ministry of the Church.
- The spiritual gifts bestowed upon the believers in any geographical area are capable of sustaining both the material and spiritual needs of the local churches.
- Every Church Age believer has at least one spiritual gift bestowed by God at the point of salvation. Every believer has an assignment to do in the Body (Church).
- Every spiritual gift is attached with a call to serve God when the believer developed the spiritual capacity (Bible doctrine resident in the soul available for application).
- Effectiveness in the ministry is dependent on the spirituality and spiritual maturity of the believer not on the spiritual gift(s) he possesses.

The communication spiritual gifts require maximum Bible doctrine (spiritual maturity) and spirituality for effective results. Although service spiritual gifts require only minimum Bible doctrine, its effectiveness likewise depends on spiritual maturity. Natural abilities, talents, skills, and personality have nothing to do with the spiritual gifts.

Every believer is called unto salvation, called unto sanctification and called unto spiritual service as a royal ambassador of Christ. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). God bestowed spiritual gift(s) to believers (1 Cor. 12:11) according to His perfect plan and purpose. The believer cannot choose, demand, or request for his spiritual gifts.

All legitimate Christian ministries are designed to contribute to the spiritual growth of the believers (Eph. 4:11-17) through the exercise of spiritual gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit..

Legitimate Christian ministries are under the six categories of permanent spiritual gifts assigned for the maintenance of doctrinal teaching in the Church Age.

The venue for exercising the spiritual gifts of helps, mercy, giving, administration, and pastor-teacher is within the local church. The gift of evangelism is exercised outside the church.

Satan has invented great and outstanding "Christian ministries" which the ignorant believers gladly received unsuspectingly. The world is filled with people claiming to be servants of God without really doing the work of the ministry. It is easy to spiritualize the work, task, activity, or programs that are not really spiritual. The world is filled with false and false ministers of God who have successfully capitalized on the "ministry of God" and gained extensive wealth and fame (Philippians 3:17-18).

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Church, equipped the believers with the ultimate power Source, and leaving them with two royal commissions (royal priesthood and royal ambassadorship). Christ provided the Church Age believers with an invisible palace (the divine dynasphere) where the spiritual resources are all available.

There is no so called Christian ministry is acceptable to God that are product of the cosmic system. The legitimate servant or minister of God is:

- One who is a regenerate believer
- One who possesses spiritual gifts
- One who responds to the call of service
- One who exercises his spiritual gifts with virtue
- One who is spiritually mature
- One who is not serving for the sake of money
- One who is spiritual mature
- One who is diligent to study the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15)
- One who is able to teach the whole counsel of God (1 Tim. 4:13) without adding or omitting anything.

The spiritual growth of each individual believer is dependent upon that which the pastor-teacher teaches and feed from the pure Bible doctrine (Eph. 4:7-16). There is no spiritual growth apart from Bible doctrine. Without the centrality and concentration on Bible doctrine, there is no legitimate ministry. You may call anything you want, but it is not a ministry of God.



# Legitimate Christian Ministries

Chereguine Bible Doctrine Ministries  
[www.dikaosune.com](http://www.dikaosune.com)

Legitimate Christian Ministries  
Tract No. 15