

5. Developing Ministry Skills Through Doing and Reporting – Part 2

In our last topic, we began discussing how Christ developed ministry skills through doing and reporting. We looked at Matthew 10:5-8, where Christ gave the disciples very specific instructions before He sent them out to minister without Him physically present with them. Today, we will be looking at the second part of those instructions, as well as the disciples report when they returned from their ministry trip.

In Matthew 10:9-14, we read, “Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.” In these verses, we see that Christ was teaching the disciples that they could depend on Him to supply their needs.

Christ would give them different instructions when He sent them out at a later time, but first, they needed to learn that Christ was able to supply their needs. As a result, Christ specifically told them that there were certain things they were not to take with them on this trip. These included:

- extra money
- a bag for food
- an extra coat
- an extra pair of sandals
- an extra staff

Here, we see that one of the most important lessons Christ wanted to teach the disciples, as they began to minister, was that He would supply their needs. This is a key lesson for developing leaders. If a developing spiritual leader does not learn to depend on the Lord for his needs, he will regularly spend time worrying about how he is going to live. Instead of enjoying the peace of God, his life will be filled with fear and worry. Today, many spiritual leaders have never learned this lesson. That is why many leaders measure success by money and people, rather than by helping people grow to spiritual maturity and become reproductive Christians.

Next, Christ told the disciples that the first question they were to ask when they entered a new town was “who was worthy”. Then, they were to stay with that person until they left the town. A person who is worthy is one who is respected by the other people of the town or city. A worthy person is one who has contact and influence with many others in that town or city. The first contacts will often determine effectiveness, or lack of it, in a new area. Christ did not want the disciples to develop additional obstacles for an effective ministry. That would happen if the disciples stayed with someone none of the rest of the people in the town respected.

Next, we see that the disciples were to stay at the home of the person who was respected by the other people. This would do two things. First, it would give them the opportunity to discuss the

kingdom of God with that household over an extended period of time. This would give the opportunity to answer the questions of those in that household. This would be the beginning of the development of spiritual leadership in that community. Second, by staying at the home of a person who was respected by others, that person would also have a network of relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances with whom to share the Gospel.

Verse 12 tells what the disciples were to do at each home they visited. We see that they were to greet the people of the home. Here, we see that the disciples were to take time to get acquainted with those who lived in the home. In Luke 10:5, we see that the disciples were to greet the people in the home by saying, "Peace to this house". This was a Jewish greeting that meant *blessing or well-being*. We see that such a greeting is implied by the statement in Matthew 10:13. That verse says, "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you." By taking time to greet people, and get acquainted with them, we begin to build a relationship with them.

Christ also told the disciples how to handle rejection in a home or a city. Verse 14 says, "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet." Here, we see that we are to help developing leaders handle rejection by turning the rejection over to the Lord. If they spoke words of rejection, they would cause greater rejection. Instead, the Lord said to take an action that would turn any rejection over to the Lord. Verse 15 tells us that when we turn rejection over to the Lord, He will handle it.

Mark 6:30-31 tells us what happened when the Twelve returned from this ministry trip. Those verses say, "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.'" We see that Christ did three things when the apostles returned:

- ◆ Christ listened while they told what they had done.
- ◆ Christ listened while they told what they had taught.
- ◆ Christ took them to a deserted place for a time of rest.

We need to do these same three things the first time after sending out teams to minister when we are not with them.

First, we need to listen to what the developing leaders did as they went out and shared the Gospel with strangers. As we listen, we will see what they have learned and applied. We will also see what things need to be re-emphasized before we send them out again. People will develop best, as leaders, if they can tell what they have done. They will be encouraged by having us listen to them. By listening, we show them that what they have done is important and that we want to hear how the Lord guided them.

Second, we need to listen to what developing leaders taught as they shared the Gospel with strangers. In this way, we know what teachings they understand clearly and what things need to be explained more clearly. We can then encourage them by letting them know those things that they shared clearly. This immediate encouragement will help them to remember to share those things in the future. We also know what things we will need to explain more clearly in the future.

As we explain those things again in future days and weeks, they will become better equipped to share the Gospel.

Third, we need to spend time alone with developing leaders where we rest and relax together. When developing leaders have been busy in ministry, they need to talk about more than just what they did and what they taught. There are at least three things that need to be discussed after those initial times of ministry:

- their personal spiritual growth
- their questions
- this is also the time to ask them key questions

The discussion of personal spiritual growth should provide the opportunity for developing leaders to discuss what lessons they learned, from their ministry, that will help their character development. We want to help developing leaders learn to focus on becoming more like Christ. As we discuss what they did, the Lord will often provide opportunities to discuss how they handled different situations. The problems that were faced usually provide opportunities to discuss how Christ would have handled those same problems. This helps them to grow in godly character.

After a ministry trip, developing leaders also have a lot of questions, because they have faced new situations they had not faced in the past. As we discuss their questions, we will help them learn to deal with new situations in a Biblical way. The way most people handle new situations is to do what they have done in previous situations. In some situations, they applied Biblical principles, while in other situations they may have handled them as they had seen them handled in the past. This provides the opportunity to teach Biblical principles for handling similar situations in the future.

Christ also used the time after a ministry trip to ask key questions. In Luke 9:1-10, we read how Christ sent out the twelve, as well as their return and their report. They were interrupted in their time alone by the multitude, where Christ fed the five thousand. However, when they got alone, Luke 9:18-20 gives the questions Christ asked the disciples. Those verses say, “And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, ‘Who do the crowds say that I am?’ So they answered and said, ‘John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said, ‘The Christ of God.’” After asking these key questions, Christ began telling the disciples about His coming death and resurrection.

People develop ministry skills as we give them the opportunity to do what we have shown them and they have participated in. They also learn the importance of depending on the Lord for His guidance and His power. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians develop ministry skills.