

2. Developing Your Ministry to the Team

In our last topic, we talked about helping developing leaders learn to develop a team. Today, we will be focusing on how to help those developing leaders learn to minister to their team members. This is of critical importance in the process of helping developing leaders build an effective team ministry. Christ spent the majority of His time ministering to the team He was developing. Paul also spent a large amount of time ministering to the team that traveled with him.

In Mark 3:14a, we see the first reason why Christ chose the twelve. That verse says, “Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him...” Christ realized the critical importance of spending much time with this team, so they would be equipped to carry on the ministry when Christ returned to heaven. In the same way, we help developing leaders realize the importance of spending time with the team they are building by the time we spend with those developing leaders.

Christ spent time with the disciples in a wide variety of situations, in addition to the time He spent ministering with them. John 2:2 says, “Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” That social event became the place where Christ performed His first recorded miracle. John 2:11 says, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” Although it was a social event, it resulted in the disciples believing in Him.

Another social event Christ took the disciples to was to a dinner at the house of Matthew. Matthew 9:9-10 says, “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.” Christ showed the disciples the importance of accepting those who were rejected by society. Because Christ accepted the friends of Matthew, He was able to call them to repentance and faith. In addition, the disciples themselves were learning to accept others.

Christ showed His disciples the importance of accepting people of other cultures by taking them with Him as He showed acceptance of people of other cultures. John 4:27 says, “And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’” The disciples learned to accept the Samaritans, because they saw that Christ accepted the Samaritans. Here is an illustration that a leader ministers to the team he is developing as much by his actions as by his words.

Christ ministered to the team in other ways as they spent time with Him. He used their times alone to ask them questions. Matthew 16:13-16 says, “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ So they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” Once these questions were answered, Matthew 16:21 says, “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”

Christ used the time, as they traveled together, to discuss with the team some very important lessons. One day, after they had traveled together, Christ asked the disciples a question. Mark 9:33-35 says, “Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, ‘What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?’ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” In this case, the disciples were ashamed to tell what they had been discussing as they walked along the road. However, Christ used that discussion as an opportunity to teach about humility. This opportunity only came because they traveled together.

Christ ministered to the team by giving them very specific instructions the first time He sent them out. Matthew 10:5-8 tells us, “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.’” When a team first begins to minister, the team needs very specific instructions, because they are doing something they have not done before. Later, when they have had more experience ministering, it will not be necessary for the instructions to be as specific, because they will know what they have done in the past.

Another way Christ ministered to His team was by giving them an opportunity to report the things they had done and taught. Mark 6:30 says, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” Christ ministered to the team by giving them the opportunity to tell what they had done. He also ministered to them by listening to what they had taught. As developing leaders learn to listen to what their team has done and taught, they will then be able to give guidance in the future when further help is needed.

Christ took the disciples with Him when He went to the grave of Lazarus. The disciples, and the others who were there, could see the love of Christ in action. John 11:35-36 says, “Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, ‘See how He loved him!’” The disciples also knew that Christ loved them. John 13:1 says, “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” John 13:4-5 tells us one of the ways Christ showed that love. Christ “...rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.”

Christ followed this action a few minutes later by giving the disciples a new commandment that would guide their ministry to one another in the future. John 13:34-35 says, “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’” Christ knew that the impact the disciples would have on the world was directly related to the way they ministered to one another as a team. The one characteristic that Christ said would distinguish the

disciples, and show that they were followers of Christ, was their love for one another.

One of the things that will make the greatest impact on the world is the opportunity to see Christians relate to one another with genuine Christian love. That is why it is so important to help every developing leader develop a genuine love for the team that he will lead. This love will be shown by the way he prays for the team, ministers to the team, encourages the team, and in many other ways. One of the things that was said about the early church was, “See how they love one another.” As we help developing leaders learn to have that kind of love for the team they will be leading, that team will have a great impact for the Lord.

Christ ministered to the team that He was developing by spending much time with them. They were learning how He ministered, and then began to minister with Him. Later, when Christ returned to heaven, they continued to minister as they had seen Him minister. In the same way, we will show developing leaders how to minister by taking them with us as we minister. First, they will become partners with us. Then, they will be able to lead others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to minister to their team.