

5. Helping Team Members Learn to Minister

One of the joys of developing a team is to see the team members begin to minister to one another. Christ spent more than three years developing the team that would carry on the ministry when He returned to heaven. We see that these team members began to learn how to minister to one another. That had become a normal part of their lives, by the time Christ returned to heaven. Acts 3:1 gives us an illustration when it says, “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.” Here, we see that it was a natural part of the lives of the disciples to spend time with one another and minister to one another. When Christ returned to heaven, the team members had each other.

As a team leader develops a team, one of the first things that the team leader wants to do is help the team members learn to minister to one another. 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.” One of the ways a team leader can do this is to spend time discussing the “one anothers” found in Scripture with the team. In the New Testament, we are given twelve things we are to avoid in our relationships with one another and thirty-one things we are commanded to do in our relationships with one another as Christians. (see pages 19-35 of *New Life in the Family of Christ* at www.sveq.org). Since there are thirty-one positive one anothers, a team leader may encourage each team member to number the positive one anothers and consciously work to apply that particular one another on that day of the month with other Christians, especially with other team members.

A team leader also wants to help each team member determine what ways he or she can help the growth of the other team members. This is part of our service to one another as a ministry team. One of the ways each team member can serve the others is to show others how they minister in various situations. One team member may love to visit people who are in the hospital, while other team members may feel very awkward in a hospital. In that case, the team member who loves to visit in the hospital would be the one to take the leadership when team members go together to visit someone in the hospital. The other team members that go along will be shown how to make hospital visits, and over time they will have learned what to say do when visiting others in the hospital. This same principle can be applied to every other ministry opportunity.

One of the ways Christ developed the ministry of the disciples to one another was by giving them ministry assignments where they worked together as a team. Mark 6:7a says, “And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by two*.” Here, we see that, instead of sending out twelve individuals, Christ chose to send out six teams of two, so they could learn to minister to each other. Matthew 10:7-8 tells us that Christ gave them some specific assignments as He sent them out in teams, ““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.”” One of the ways the teams could minister to one another was by reminding one another what Christ had told them to do. Mark 6:30 tells us that each team later had the opportunity to report what they had done and what they had taught.

Luke 10:1 tells us that Christ later sent out thirty-five teams to minister, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” This gave a larger group of disciples the opportunity to learn to minister to one another. Here, we see again that Christ sent them out in teams, so they would learn to minister to one another. These two periods of team ministry showed that Christ had a great concern to develop the ability of the disciples to work together as teams. In the same way, that should be one of our concerns as we lead others.

One of the things that ministering with a team did was give Christ the opportunity to show the disciples how to deal with conflict. Matthew 20:20-21 says, “Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’” This request led to a big conflict on the team. Matthew 20:24 says, “And when the ten heard *it*, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.” One of the greatest problems in team ministry is conflict between team members. Notice how Christ handled this problem.

Matthew 20:25-28 says, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” Here, we see that Christ used conflict between team members to teach the nature of spiritual leadership. He taught the team to focus on serving one another, instead of seeking power and position. This is a key part of helping a team learn to minister as a team.

When Christ washed the feet of the disciples, He also used that as an opportunity to teach the disciples to minister to one another. John 13:13-15 says, “‘You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.’” Christ had ministered to the team members. Then, He helped the disciples learn what He had just demonstrated. As a team, they were to follow the example of Christ by serving one another. Needless to say, as team leaders, we will show the team the importance of serving one another as we serve the members of the team.

Christ showed the disciples one other very important lesson about teaching the team to minister to one another that night. In John 15:15, we read, “‘No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.’” Christ says that a spiritual team has a different relationship than a worldly team. On a spiritual team, one of the goals is to become friends with the team, not just be the team leader. This speaks of a change in relationship to the team. A spiritual team leader will find that his effectiveness in leading the team will be directly related to the way he builds friendships with each of the various members of the team.

This verse also contains another important principle for effective team leadership. Christ said that He was sharing, with the disciples, all of the things He had heard from the Father. Here, we see that an effective team leader shares his plans with the team, so they know where they are going together as a team. One of the things that will build a team spirit, more than anything else, is knowing where the team is going. That is why sharing plans and goals is a very important part of the ministry of the team leader to the team.

Christ has called every Christian to be a part of His team. As we minister, we are functioning as a part of that team. As we grow spiritually, Christ also gives us the opportunity to be a leader of a part of that team. When we are given the opportunity to lead a part of that team, we will find that we will multiply our effectiveness as we help that team learn to minister to one another. May the Lord richly bless you as you help team members learn to minister to one another.