

The Church, God's Plan for This Age: The Goal of Every Member Ministry

Ephesians 4:13-16

August 30, 2020

The goal of every member ministry in the body of Christ is to help all believers grow in a knowledge of Christ and of the core doctrines of the faith, to mature to a greater Christlikeness, and to manifest love for one another in the life of the church.

1. Goal #1: Grow in the knowledge of Christ and Christlikeness (13).
 - a. Every member ministry strengthens our unity in the doctrines of the faith (13a).
 - i. In order to minister effectively, we must know the doctrines of God's Word (Colossians 3:16).
 - ii. In order to minister effectively, we must maintain doctrinal purity (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
 - b. Every member ministry strengthens our knowledge of the Son of God (13b).
 - i. Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
 - ii. Philippians 3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"
 - c. Every member ministry makes us more mature and Christlike (13c).
 - i. Ministry perfects the minister even more than those receiving the ministry.
 - ii. Ministry is the expression of Christlikeness – "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).
2. Goal #2: Avoid dangerous and deceitful teaching (14).
 - a. The goal of every member ministry is doctrinal maturity – "that we henceforth be no more children."
 - i. The doctrinal maturity of individual believers contributes to the doctrinal maturity of the body.
 - ii. Doctrinal maturity is an arduous process.
 - iii. Galatians 4:19 "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."
 - b. The goal of every member ministry is theological discernment – "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine."
 - i. Hebrews 5:12-14 "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - ii. The better we know the Bible, the better we can discern the deceptions of false teachers that seek to infiltrate the church.
3. Goal #3: Develop maturity in speaking the truth in love (15-16).
 - a. Your gift is a vehicle for speaking the truth in love (15; Proverbs 27:6 "Faithful are the wounds of a **friend**...").
 - i. Ministry builds bridges for ministering truth.
 - ii. If you want to become like Christ, surround yourself with people that will tell you the truth in love.
 - b. Speaking the truth in love is the responsibility of every member (16).
 - i. "Truth without love is brutality, but love without truth is hypocrisy."
 - ii. Christ is the source of strength for speaking the truth in love – "from whom the whole body..." (16).
 - iii. Every member is expected to contribute to the spiritual growth of the body – "whole body...every joint...every part" (16).

Conclusion:

1. What does your ministry to others reveal about how well you know the Bible and its Author?
2. How is your ministry to others making you more like Christ?
3. Does your ministry help others grow in Christ-likeness?
4. Are you surrounding yourself with people who will speak the truth in love to you? Are you one who speaks the truth in love to those around you?