

The Harvest is Plentiful, Workers are Few

In Luke 10:2, "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.* Jesus said these words after seeing crowds of people in need of healing and salvation. He encourages disciples to ask Lord of the harvest, to send out workers into his harvest field. Jesus compared evangelism to the natural harvest. If we are to reap the harvest when it is ready, we must go where the harvest is when it is ripe.

The first missionary developed from prayer.(Acts13:3) Evangelism was main activities of early Church. And it was a natural sharing of good news. It was engaged in continuously by all believers. The practice was to go where people were and disciple them. Each believer took the Great Commission as a personal command to evangelize. They did it everywhere, every day and work in order to get the message out.(Acts 5:42) Every church reproduced, every member reproduced, every home was a center of evangelism. If we are to impact the nations with the Gospel, we must return to evangelism as our priority. Commission was given to all followers of Christ and command was to every creature. God's method is for each disciple to bear witness of the Gospel message. To "witness" is to tell what you have seen, heard, or experienced. The Holy Spirit helps you bear witness to the Gospel.(Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit directs by guidance, calling and enabling workers, and by correcting our plans to bring them into harmony with God's purpose.

When Jesus first began His ministry, He announced a plan that followed throughout His earthly ministry. "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me, to preach the gospel... To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*"(Luke 4:18-19) Jesus later gave a plan for the extension of the Gospel to the nations of the world.(Acts 1:8) The disciples were to first evangelize Jerusalem, then go on to Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. You are to start right where you are and continue in ever-expanding circles until you are touching ends of the world. When you are invading Satan's kingdom with the good news of the Gospel, you must expect opposition from the political, economic, and religious worlds. You must also expect internal attacks from within the church and direct attacks from Satan. Always remember that you are engaging in a spiritual battle over the souls of men and women. Do not fight a spiritual battle with carnal weapons of debate and anger. Do not criticize, condemn or argue. Be courteous and tactful. Rely upon the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Keep returning to the main point of mission.

The Gospel must be preached and taught, but it must include demonstration of the Kingdom of God in action. Jesus commanded His disciples, "*As you go. . .heal the sick, cast out demons.*"(Mat.10:7-8) Evangelism is accompanied by the demonstration of God's power- miracles and healing. We must have both a "harvest" and a "soldier" mentality. When we become believers, we enlist in the spiritual army of the Kingdom of God. We are called to endure hardness as a good soldier.(2Ti.2:3) A soldier cannot withdraw or go on leave just because things get tough. The test of a good soldier is his performance on the battle field. Thus, a soldier of Jesus Christ is open to fresh assignments, revelations from the Holy Spirit. The goal of all evangelism is leading men to ask forgiveness of sins(repentance)and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Each person to whom you witness is different. You need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, as He is the one who draws men to salvation. The born-again experience is conceived and birthed by God.(1John 5:1) Your witness must always be focused on the goal of leading that person to Christ. The basic message of the Gospel is that He died for sin in our place; He rose from the dead; He is the only way to God.(1CO15:1-4) Almost persuading someone to accept Jesus is not enough to save them from Hell. As you share the Gospel, lead the unsaved person to an agreement. Keeps the person participating in the conversation. Provide a little information, then ask a question that calls for a response. As you conclude your presentation, build upon their own responses to close with a final positive response to the Gospel. We are called to win the soul, not just witness. Closing your presentation of the Gospel is asking, "Do you understand what I have been telling you?" "Would you like to make Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior? Lead the person in a prayer asking forgiveness of sins, confess and accepting Jesus as Savior.

Always remember that in evangelism you are dealing with the eternal destiny of souls. Jesus said to His disciples, "*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*"(Mat.4:19), He was giving a natural example of a spiritual truth. No fisherman simply throws in his net. He must also pull it in to make a catch. Jesus entrusted the ordinary people with the responsibility of spreading the Gospel. He took fishermen from their boats and made them into fishers of men. The Church is the agent of the Kingdom of God in the world and is commanded to take the Gospel message to all peoples of the earth. Evangelism requires that every believer is motivated with compassion for a lost and dying world.

In the Great commission, there are two types of teachings. First, sharing of Gospel to lead people to salvation.(MAR16:15) Second, teaching of new converts with discipleship that leads Jesus becoming Lord of a person's life, Perfect in Christ. Follow up include; confessing Christ publicly, baptism in water, baptism in the Holy Spirit, developing a devotional life, becoming part of a local church(fellowship). The process of evangelism is complete when new believers become active in the task of evangelism themselves and begin to reproduce spiritually. Like the servants in Jesus' parable, we are to be about the business of God's kingdom, *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.*(MAT28:19) We represent Christ's ambassadors, God making His appeal as it were through us: in that they have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, calling you to imploring men and women everywhere to '*Be reconciled to God*'(2Co.5:20)

God's plan is for each disciple to be a witness of the Gospel. The early Church grew as they followed this plan. Each believer shared the Gospel and reproduced spiritually. As Church grew, God called some people to serve full-time as pastors, evangelists, prophets, teachers, apostles. Over a period of time, believers became part of one of two divisions in the Church. They were either clergy or laity. The word "laity" means "all the people of God". The terms "layman" or laity came to be used for those who were not serving in special full-time functions in the church. The term "clergy" developed to identify professional ministers in the church. Clergy refers to those who consider the ministry their profession or who are employed full-time by the church. Over a period of time in church history, gradual separation developed between clergy and laity. Many laymen stopped reproducing and due to spiritual immaturity become babes in Christ. *Although by this time you ought to be teachers -You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word.* (Hebrews 5:12) Believers have shifted their responsibility to the clergy. Unfortunately this captures the heart of our traditional practice. This is one of the reasons we have not yet reached the world with the Gospel. Nowhere in New Testament is any form of clergy used to designate a separate class of "ordained" leaders. Instead, clergy (Greek:clerou) refers to inheritance laid up for all the saints.(Col.1:12;Acts 26:18) The saints as collective whole are considered of in New Testament as God's inheritance. We should be reminded of the deceitfulness of sin when we realize the unscriptural and damaging concept has taken root in Christianity. The calling of believers is to bear witness of God who has brought them out of spiritual darkness into the light of Jesus Christ.(John 9:5) Believers are told to "*walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*"(Eph. 4:1) Those who grow like Christ will be sure of their calling and election.(2 Peter 1:10)

Bible does teach division of labor in the Church; for leaders gave themselves devoted to study of the Word and prayer. But every person is to be involved in the spread of the Gospel.(Act6:1-6) While believers have different callings and gifts (Rom.12:6), they are all servants of the Lord.(Rom.14:4) Paul considered himself a "brother and fellow servant" with Tychicus.(Col.4:7) Epaphroditus was Paul's "brother, co-worker and fellow soldier"(Phi.2:25) Apostles never talked in terms of "us" and "them" in context of serving Christ. They considered themselves to be fellow laborers with all believers in the church. Gradually, things changed, full-time ministers began to be identified as representing the Church, while the laymen were seen as believers or attendees instead of as fellow servants of Jesus Christ. Out of this mindset grew hierarchical system in which the distance between clergy and laity increased. In church, there is no division between sacred (holy) and secular because Jesus is Lord of all.(1 Pet.2:9) Every immersed believer has been baptized by one Spirit into the one body of Christ. And the racial, social, gender differences that divide society do not exist within the body of Christ: *You are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*(Gal.3:26) All in the body of Christ, whether saints, bishops, deacons are the people of God who believe in the Lord Jesus.(Phi. 1:1;2Cor.6:16;1Pet.2:9-10)The clergy practice is a heresy that must be renounced. Since it is a tradition of men,(myth) it nullifies the Word of God.(Mar7:13) It strikes at the heart of priesthood of all believers that Jesus purchased on the cross. It contradicts as Jesus said, "You are all brethren"(Matthew 23:8)

There are a number of denominations that require specific training and certifications to become a pastor. Becoming a biblical pastor or minister requires daily reliance upon the Lord and pouring one's life into others. It is true that there has been an emphasis on "calling," meaning that a person must have a special call from God to be a pastor. But a person wants to be a minister, he should pursue it: "*This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of an overseer desires a good work*"(1Tim.3:1) The one desiring to be a pastor has the encouragement that pastoring is a noble task, and he will have the support of those to whom he is currently ministering. If God is in it, God will open more doors for ministry. However, one's motivation for pursuing the ministry should always be God's glory and good of others. A person who enters the ministry for money, power, influence, prestige or fame is seeking wrong motive.

In Eph. 4:11-12, when a man fills the office of evangelist, pastor, teacher, his calling is actually a gift from God for the work of the church. The purpose of the spiritual gifts is to equip the members of the church for a life of service to God. The purpose of seminary training is to prepare for service those who desire to the office of leadership in the work of the Lord. "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others.*"(2Tim.2:2) Formal Bible training helps ensure that ministry of the Word of God is maintained and flourishes in the church. When someone is persuaded that he is being called to the ministry, he should seek to explore his gifts, prepare himself to the response that call. This is one of reasons seminaries exist and seeking formal education may be consistent with a person's call. Bible has an intense study of systematic theology of biblical studies. But we should not puff up with knowledge. At the same time, while formal Bible education is important and valuable, God can enable a man with no formal bible education to be an excellent pastor or elder. Place of study is not as important as the Teacher—the Holy Spirit who infuses the student with knowledge, power, wisdom. Study carefully: *Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house*"(Pro.24:27)

What is Ordination?

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You did not choose Me, but I chose you and ordained you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain. (John 15:16) Ordination, in Christian churches, a rite for the dedication, commissioning or appointing of ministers. The ceremony consists of the laying of hands of the ordaining minister upon the head of consecrated person, with prayer for the gifts of Holy Spirit and of grace (anointing) required for carrying out of the ministry.

The word ordain in the Bible refers to a setting in place or designation; for example, deacons were ordained to serve the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:1-6); and pastors were ordained in each city in Crete. (Tit 1:5) In Acts 13:2-4, an example of a ministerial ordination: *"While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off."* It is God Himself who calls men to the ministry and qualifies them with gifts. The members of the church recognize God's clear leading. With prayer and fasting, church lays hands to demonstrate their commissioning. God works through the church, as both church and Spirit are said to "send" the missionaries.

Evangelism without establishing local churches is like bringing children and not claiming responsibility for their subsequent care. A person considered evangelized when they become a functioning part of a church fellowship. The mission of the church is to fulfill God's purpose, plans. As believers matured, local leaders were raised up by God. God sets leaders with special gifts in the Church. (Eph. 4:11-16) Their purpose is to equip believers for the work of the ministry. They do this by use their spiritual gifts. Elders and deacons also serve the church in areas of ministry. Apostle Paul ordained pastors for the churches he planted. He and Barnabas directed the appointment or ordination of elders "in each church" in Galatia. (Acts 14:23) He instructed Titus to "appoint elders in every town" on Crete.

When God calls and qualifies a man for the ministry, it will be apparent both to that man and to the rest of the church. It is the duty of the church elders, together with the congregation, to recognize and accept the calling. After that, an ordination service is appropriate. Timothy was set apart as a leader and was to continue living out his calling in the church. *Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.* (2 Tim 1:6)

The qualifications of the elder/deacons are found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 8-13. the responsibility is to preach, teach, exhort. He must not be a recent convert, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same judgment as devil. *In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. A deacon must be faithful to his wife (if married, 1 Co. 7:1,7; Mat. 19:12) and must manage his children and his household well. And obtain great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. Women in ministry: I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon (servant) of the church.* (v. 11; Rom 16:1; 1 Co. 7:34)

The qualities to be an effective minister: Your lifestyle should not contradict your testimony. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Have a working knowledge of God's Word. Be a person of prayer. Have a concern for the lost. Saint Stephen, one of the first seven deacons in the Church. (Acts 6:5) A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, preached Christ fearlessly. Proclaimed Christ boldly to the leaders of the Jews. (Acts 7:59-8:1) Deacon is a ministry in Churches that is related to serve. The word "deacon" (diákonos) means servant or minister. The word Shepherd is translated "pastor" Pastor is someone who tends flocks because pastors should guide the flock of God and feed them the Word of God.

The ordaining includes the following characteristics: This one set apart is an experienced and tested believer who is walking with God, spiritually qualified, called and is then placed into specific ministries or tasks. This Minister is connected to the work of the church. He desires to build the church and God's kingdom and understands that the object of this appointment into ministry is the spreading of the gospel. The Holy Spirit equips them so that through their leadership believers may grow their faith, lead their families, serve others in love, share the gospel. (Acts 20:32) Your ordination challenges you to be: A person of peace. A person who holds no bitter roots; you will not take offense easily. A person who is humble/teachable; does not show favoritism, prejudice behind; remain accountable to believers.

To express your acceptance, you are asked these questions. Do you believe in the call of this ministry God himself is calling you to serve as a Minister? Do you believe that the bible, the only infallible rule of faith and life? Do you promise to the doctrinal standards practiced? Do you promise to do the work faithfully, and in submission to the authorities God has placed in your life? What is your answer? Answer [by the candidate]: I do, God helping me.

The officiating minister shall then say, with the laying on of hands at this point. May God, our Heavenly Father, who has called you, guide you by his Word, equip you with his Holy Spirit, and so prosper your grace ministry ordination so that the church may increase greatly and His name will be praised and glorified. In Jesus name. Amen.

Final charge to the newly ordained Minister! I charge you, to guard yourself and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you a leader. Be a shepherd of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

A disciple is one who: Forsakes all, Denies self, Take up your cross-absolute surrender, Follows Jesus, Is a servant, Is obedient, Abides in the word, Demonstrates God's love, God's Kingdom his priority, Glorifies God thru fruitfulness.