



Effectiveness or Faithfulness in Ministry?

There are many aspects of this theme, but what I will share with you today represents what the Lord put on my heart for you.

Many are very concerned to be found “effective” in their ministries, but I don’t personally find a single word in the New Testament on being effective. What I find is a single focus on being found “Faithful.”

1 Corinthians 4:1,2

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

Colossians 1:7

7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

Colossians 4:7

7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me.

It is a great prescription for burnout and misery, to place upon yourself the requirement to be effective. I may preach, but if you don’t apply it that is between you and God, not you and me. I may pray for you, but if you resist the Spirit that is between you and Him. I may point you to the right way, but if you don’t follow it you will take that up more with Him than with me.

If there is any effectiveness in the ministry it appears to only be within God’s domain.

1 Corinthians 3:6

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

It would appear as though our job, as regards effectiveness, is to let God, by His Spirit, move through us and accomplish His purposes. If we do so, then only indirectly could we consider our ministries to have been “effective.” In reality it is up to us to be faithful and He will be effective.

One of the major weaknesses of the Corporation Model of the Church, is that it has an inherent expectation that the CEO/Sr. Pastor, will manifest effectiveness in his ministry. It is expected of him that he be effective in at least the following areas:

1. Church growth.
2. New souls saved.

3. A staff that works harmoniously together.
4. Sermons that please the congregation.
5. Fulfilling the expectations of the congregation as to what they think a Sr. Pastor should do.
6. Services that start on time, finish on time, and don't challenge the people too much.
7. Be all things to all people all the time. I.e. emphasize evangelism to the satisfaction of the soul winners, emphasize worship to the satisfaction of the worshippers, emphasize emotional healing to the satisfaction of the counselors, teach deeply enough to the satisfaction of the teachers, preach intensely enough to the satisfaction of the preachers, pray long enough and intensely enough to the satisfaction of the intercessors, be administratively organized enough for the administrators, be relaxed enough to the satisfaction of the easy goers, be spiritual enough for the mystics, funny enough for the humorous, serious enough for the serious, visit enough for the lonely, be home enough for your family, etc., etc..
8. Get the people to give enough money to pay all the staff, fund all the ministries, pay the mortgage, purchase the supplies, pay the utilities.

Hebrews 13:17

17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who **must give account**. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

The effective doctrine is especially stressed by this verse. However, the account we must not give is for the obedience of the saints. It can only be for the way we handled the saints.

One of the ways I believe we are specifically called to be faithful is to be available to the Lord to produce disciples by the power of His Spirit working through our lives.

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,20 "teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Notice he says "teaching them to observe...." He doesn't say "making them observe." Outcomes belong to the Lord, not the teacher.

2 Timothy 2:1-2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, **commit these to faithful men** who will be able to teach others also.

Galatians 4:10,11

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.11 I am afraid for you, lest I have **labored for you in vain**.

Notice Paul didn't say - "I'm afraid for me...". He knew He wasn't going to be evaluated on the basis of whether they walked out what they were taught, but they surely were. I'm really concerned for people who are ever hearing but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. I'm deeply concerned about disobedience in the lives of those I minister to, but much more from the standpoint of what their disobedience says about them, than what it says

about me.

If we're faithful, God will reward our ministries. If we're effective it just might mean we've learned to manipulate people to make us look good. I'd rather have God look good and get all the glory, than be concerned about whether I've been effective and thus have something to boast about.