

DAILY DOSE OF DOCTRINE

July 7 - 11, 2008

(Next issue: August 11)



July 14, 2008

Ministry: **Shepherding**

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”¹

Broadly speaking, the ministry of shepherding or pastoring involves nurturing, caring for and guiding “people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ”². It is frequently linked with teaching and is identified as a leadership office in the church, with the charge to ‘feed the flock’ and protect them from false teaching.³

Shepherds are passionate about spiritual formation. They are committed to ministries that feed, guide and protect believers. They see times of crisis as an opportunity for spiritual growth and are willing to walk with people through the ‘valleys’ to get there.

Shepherds do not dominate or foster co-dependency. They rejoice in seeing people move on to maturity. They strive to help believers discover their own gifts and callings for service so that they can experience a fuller working of the Spirit in their lives.

While we often think of pastoring in a congregational context, this ministry is exercised in a wide variety of contexts: small groups, youth work, children’s ministries, crisis ministries, helping those with addictions or other special needs, individual spiritual direction, counseling, serving teams, one’s own family, etc. Wherever there are Christians, God seems to call forth people with a heart and skills to care for his sheep and promote their spiritual growth.

¹ Acts 20:28 (TNIV)

² Bruce Bugbee, Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way, p. 61

³ Eg. 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28-35, 1 Timothy 3:1-10

July 15, 2008

Ministry: Teaching

*(Apollos) was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately”
“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.”¹*

Teachers clarify and communicate truth. They enjoy studying, learning and applying Biblical concepts. They are passionate about making difficult or complicated things straightforward and simple. They rejoice when they see others ‘get it’ and begin to live in more Christ-like ways as a result.

While a passion for research and study is important for the ministry of teaching, it cannot be simply an ‘ivory tower’ exercise. If people understand the Bible better but just see it as a book written for another age or another culture, Christian teaching has not taken place. Christian teaching gives the Spirit the opportunity to apply Biblical truth to the everyday lives of believers. It enables us to be *“transformed by the renewing of our minds”²*.

Ministries of teaching take place in a wide variety of contexts: Bible classes, small groups, children’s work, worship services, training seminars, equipping for ministries, Bible colleges and seminaries, programs for those recovering from crises or addictions, writing books or study materials, etc.

Teaching is a ministry that must be held accountable. Paul commended the Bereans and others who used the scriptures to check and/or correct the teaching of even the most prominent leaders.³

¹ Acts 18:24-25 (edited) ; 1 Corinthians 3:6 (TNIV)

² Romans 12:1

³ Acts 17:11; 18:26

July 16, 2008

Ministry: Tongues

“The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”¹

The ministry of speaking in ‘tongues’ requires a supernatural divine enablement in that the person is speaking in a ‘heavenly’ language or an earthly language that he or she has never learned. Without a ministry of interpretation, tongues appears to have two functions:

In the Book of Acts, the presence of tongues is proof that a group of people have been offered the grace of God and are to be numbered among believers. Resistance to the inclusion of Gentiles in the church was partly overcome by the evident blessing of God by giving them this gift of the Spirit. While tongues were sometimes an indication of the ‘baptism’ or outpouring of the Spirit upon groups of individuals², it is not given to all. While every Christian has one or more *charismata*, not all are given tongues.³

The Bible indicates that, without interpretation, tongues are not to be used in public settings. Those with this ministry should employ it generously in private worship and intercession. Tongues may be one way in which, when we do not know exactly how to pray about something, that the Spirit *“intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”*.⁴ The problem in Corinth was that some misused tongues to proudly, publicly set themselves up over others. It is a blessing to the body when it is used humbly, privately in intercession and worship.

¹ Acts 10:45-46 (TNIV)

² Act 19:1-7; 1 Corinthians 14:21-28

³ 1 Corinthians 12:30

⁴ Romans 8:28 (TNIV)

July 17, 2008 **Ministry: Interpretation of
Tongues**

“If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church; let them speak to themselves and to God.”¹

Occasionally, as on the day of Pentecost², someone speaking in tongues will be given a message in a foreign, earthly language such as French or Japanese. In such cases a *charisma* of interpretation may not be required .

However, when the tongue is in a ‘heavenly’ language, someone present in the group must be enabled by the Spirit to interpret it. If this ministry is not provided, then the person speaking in tongues should refrain: this was not a message for the group.

Paul intimates that tongues + interpretation serve the same purpose as prophecy for the fellowship. While it is more dramatic and exciting, the interpretation should be subject to the same discernment as a prophetic message³. If it is not deemed to be from the Lord, the leaders of the meeting should lovingly but clearly indicate this to the group.

In open meetings, leaders should seriously consider following Paul’s example in 1 Corinthians 14 by setting protocols for the use of the more dramatic charismata. The Spirit is not quenched by good boundaries, *“for God is not a God of disorder but of peace.”⁴*

¹ 1 Corinthians 14:27-28 (TNIV)

² Acts 2:4-11

³ See Daily Dose article for July 10.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:33 (NIV)

July 18, 2008 **Ministry: Word of Knowledge**

"'I have no husband,' she replied. Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'"¹

The ministry of 'word (or message) of knowledge' in 1 Corinthians 12:8 would indicate that Paul is talking about a message of supernatural revelation rather than knowledge gained by study, investigation or some other natural means. Jesus gives an example in his conversation with the woman at the well when he talks about her past and present relationships. It causes the woman to take Jesus seriously and opens her up to the gospel.

Words of knowledge may literally be a single word, a phrase, a more extended message or even a visual image. They reveal something about a person or group's past or present that is not commonly known. It may open them up to the good news, to encouragement, to conviction, to a work of healing or to some other action of the Spirit by breaking down barriers and increasing faith.

As with prophecy, those engaged in this ministry are advised to offer these insights with discretion and humility, leaving the results to God. It may be the case that a word of knowledge is presented in the midst of a conversation without the speaker realizing the import of what he/she has said. Because it may relate to something painful or private in the person's life, the recipient may not feel safe in giving an overt response or affirmation of the message. As with other ministries of the Spirit, the purpose of operating in the ministry is not to receive blessing oneself, but to bless others and build the Kingdom.

¹ John 4:17-18 (TNIV)