

DAILY DOSE OF DOCTRINE

June 9-13, 2008



June 9, 2008

Ministry: Administration

“Select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.’...Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.”¹

Jethro quickly saw that Moses would not last long if he tried to govern Israel all by himself. He put forward a practical solution to train and appoint judges over Israel that relieved Moses of the burden while furthering the purposes of God. Jethro exercised administration as a ministry of grace.

Those with ministries of administration bless the body of Christ with efficiency and effectiveness. They love to create systems that will make things run more smoothly. They glory in the details: reports, statistics, budgets, policies, feedback. They have insights into human nature that help them see the roadblocks to progress and how to overcome them. They love to use their gifts to enable others to excel and to see kingdom work flourish.

Those with a ministry of administration may sometimes be perceived as too caught up in the details and there is a potential weakness of ‘not being able to see the woods for the trees’. However those with this ministry calling are essential to almost any kingdom work. The key is to find their area of passion or calling (e.g. outreach or children’s ministry or social service or _____) and link them up with others engaged in that work. Their ministry will enable things to go forward and they will find fulfillment in being an essential part of that aspect of building the Kingdom.

¹ Exodus 18:21,24 (TNIV)

June 10, 2008

Ministry: Apostleship

“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”¹

Historically, apostleship is a somewhat controversial subject. Roman Catholics see the apostolic office as handed down in succession through the chain of bishops, archbishops and popes. The apostolic role of governing the church has therefore continued to the present day in the hierarchy of the Church.

Many Protestants have countered that the apostolic office ceased in the first century. The apostles were those who had personally encountered the risen Christ, spread that good news and preserved the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. The apostolic witness is therefore contained in the Bible and apostles do not exist today.

However, the word apostle denotes ‘one who is sent’. They are heralds or ambassadors or ‘missionaries’ in the traditional sense of that role. Numbers of persons are identified in the New Testament as ‘apostles’ who may or may not have been eyewitnesses of the resurrection and there is no indication in the Bible that the ministry would ‘die out’ with the Twelve.

Rather than associating the ministry of apostle with power or authority, we should see them as pioneers: those who cross racial, cultural, gender, generational or other barriers to bring the gospel to a new group of people. They are builders of new ministries, new kingdom activities or new churches. New fellowships are the fruit of their service.

¹ 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 (TNIV)

June 11, 2008 **Ministry: Craftsmanship**

“So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the LORD has commanded.”¹

Bezalel, Oholiab and other craftspersons and artists of Moses' time possessed '*hakamu*'. The Hebrew work '*hakamu*' refers to skills or abilities given by the Spirit of God that were used in the construction and beautification of the Tabernacle and all of its implements. Enabled by the Spirit, they wove and worked with metal, wood, precious stones and so on.

For many centuries the Church was the chief patron of the arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, tapestries, etc. There was a sense that all things of beauty reflect the beauty and creativity of the Creator. Those who gave their lives in the construction of a cathedral were encouraged to see themselves as engaged in worship with each stroke of the hammer.

Those with a modern ministry of craftsmanship may be found in a variety of settings: building or renovating in a church building or in a mission hospital, using the visual arts to communicate truth; composing or performing music, engaging in liturgical dance, guiding children in a craft time, etc.

God-given talent or skill is generally a prerequisite for a ministry of craftsmanship. That talent can be misused or neglected. It only becomes a *charisma* when shared with others for their blessing and the glory of God.

¹ Exodus 36:1 (TNIV)

June 12, 2008 **Ministry: Discernment of Spirits**

“Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”¹

The ministry of distinguishing between spirits is akin to prophecy and word of knowledge in that a divinely given ability is a prerequisite for this ministry of grace. This role is one in “which people are called upon to identify whether a particular activity is motivated by the Holy Spirit or whether somehow demonic forces are involved.”²

Discernment of spirits is of particular use in the context of ‘deliverance’ ministry, but may also be of great value in helping a fellowship to discern the validity of a prophetic message or activity. John exhorts believers: *“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world”*.³ False prophecies may, of course, arise out of the ‘flesh’ or human imagination, but they may also be the product of inspiration by evil spirits. The ministry of discernment of spirits contributes clarity to the responses and decisions of the fellowship and helps to avoid error or disunity.

Those to whom God has given this ministry need to be wary of taking inappropriate actions based on their insights. Unless the fellowship has authorized them to act in some specific way, God may be providing these insights for the purpose of intercessory prayer rather than for direct or aggressive confrontation.

¹ Act 8:21-22 (TNIV)

² Ken Berding, What are Spiritual Gifts?, p. 213-214.

³ 1 John 4:1 (TNIV)

June 13, 2008 **Ministry of Encouragement**

“Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.”¹

Barnabas was one of history’s great encouragers. When the Church in Antioch needed sound Bible teaching, Barnabas rooted out Saul of Tarsus and brought him into the fold. In doing so he brought him into contact with more Gentile believers and enabled him to build trust among Jewish Christians, paving his way to become ‘the apostle to the Gentiles’. When John Mark stumbled in his commitment, Barnabas took his part and ultimately gave us the one who was probably the first to write a ‘gospel’.

Those with a ministry of encouragement or ‘exhortation’ come alongside others to build up their faith and enable them to become what God is calling them to be. The Greek word also has aspects of ‘comfort’ or ‘consolation’. They deal with those who are discouraged and help them to experience victory.

The applications of this ministry of grace are broad and varied. Encouragers may be found in roles of leadership, mentoring, preaching, apostleship, mercy, counseling, teaching, and so on. They may be ‘type A’ personalities by nature or they may be quiet, behind-the-scenes exhorters. They provide great affirmation to individuals and they pull together people in a fellowship who might otherwise not get along very well. Sometimes their calling is to stir up a whole fellowship from complacency, discouragement or selfishness.

Can a church ever have too many disciples with this ministry of grace?

¹ Acts 15:37-38 (TNIV)