

God is big and he has big plans. One of the many wonderful aspects of being a child of God is that he involves us in those grand plans. It is a blessing beyond measure to be of use to the Lord in fulfilling his design.

Sometimes, the Lord calls individuals to do grandiose things. Think of Noah building the ark or Joseph rescuing his family and all of Egypt from famine. David smote the giant Goliath. Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal.

At other times God commissions congregations to do great things. Think of all the battles that Israel fought when they were outnumbered. The fall of Jericho ring any bells? Gideon and his 300 men may also come to mind.

One of the earliest examples of God ordaining a group of people to do something magnificent is found in Exodus 25-31.

At the beginning of chapter 25, the Lord commanded Moses to call the people together and take an offering to provide the materials necessary for building a sanctuary where he could dwell among the people. The remainder of chapter 25 and the next 5 chapters include the extremely detailed instructions concerning the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings. Go back and read how specific these instructions were. This was not going to be any ordinary tent. An Easy-Up and folding tables would not suffice for the God of all creation. After nearly six chapters of explicit instructions, the Lord told Moses (I'm sure much to Moses pleasure and relief) that he had ordained a group of men to handle the fabrication and construction of everything.

The first church building was constructed by the first church. It was a group effort. It required gifts of materials and gifts of man power.

The call of the church to minister to the needs of God's people is no different. It requires a group effort. Everyone has a role and everyone must do their part, because if we are going to win spiritual battles, we are going to win them together.

Scripture: Acts 2:41-47

I. Ministry

A. Meaning of Ministry

1. To give help to someone in need

a) For the purposes of this sermon, ministry is “helping other Christians who are in need”

(1) Outreach is a better term for helping others outside the body of Christ who are in need

(2) The church found favor with all the people by ministering to fellow Christians

(a) Having one’s needs met was mutually beneficial

B. Methods of Ministry

1. Meeting Spiritual Needs

a) Coming to Salvation (14-41; 4:33)

(1) The foremost spiritual need of all humanity is the need for a Savior

(2) The church met and meets this need through the preaching of the Gospel

b) Continuing in Sanctification (42)

(1) Once a person is saved, the process of sanctification begins

(2) The church met and meets this need through the teaching of the Bible and accountability

c) CAUTION

(1) The church cannot and therefore will not save you

(2) Church attendance and membership does not guarantee spiritual growth and maturity

2. Meeting Physical and Financial Needs

a) Physical feedings (42; 6:1)

(1) For many the meals provided by the church were the only meals they received

(2) The church provides physical meals through times of fellowship but also through benevolence

b) Physical healings (43; James 5:14-15)

- (1) It is among the church that such healings were first performed
- (2) James 5:14-15 tells those who are sick to approach the elders of the church for prayer for healing
- (3) The church petitions the Lord for healing through prayer
- c) Financial assistance (Acts 4:34-45; 2 Cor. 9:1)
 - (1) The financial gifts that were being brought were being redistributed to those who had need
 - (2) The church allocates funds and resources to offer assistance to members who have financial needs
- d) **CAUTION**
 - (1) The church will not feed you five star meals
 - (2) The church will pray for God's will in regards to physical health
 - (3) The church will not reward fiscal irresponsibility
- 3. Meeting Emotional Needs (Rom. 12:10)
 - a) Need for love (John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:10)
 - (1) There is no greater love than the love God has for humanity
 - (2) The church reminds you of and helps you experience God's love
 - b) Need for relationships (Rom. 14:19; 12:15; 1 Thess. 5:14)
 - (1) Most people crave human relationships
 - (2) The church should be a place where you have some of your dearest relationships
 - (a) Sympathy & compassion
 - (b) Encouragement & exhortation
 - (c) Constructive criticism & positive reinforcement
 - c) **CAUTION**
 - (1) The church will love you unconditionally but the church will not coddle you or tolerate sinful behavior
 - (2) The church will not stroke your ego
 - (3) The church will not allow you to abuse relationships or manipulate people

1 Peter 4:10-11 tells us that when we serve others we serve and glorify the Lord. When we serve and glorify the Lord, we win. We hand Satan a loss when we love and encourage one another. When we meet each other's needs, whether they be spiritual, physical, financial, or emotional, we strengthen the army of the Lord.

I am grateful the Lord has brought you here this morning. If you are a member of EBC, let this message remind you of your commitment to the kingdom of God through ministering to other Christians, especially those who are fellow members. I encourage you to use our time of invitation to recommit to that responsibility. Ask the Lord to show you how you can best serve your church.

If you are not a member of EBC, know that we want to love on you as well. We want you to become part of our ministerial family as we seek to honor God by caring for each other. Our invitation is your opportunity to come and join with us as we do the Lord's work.