



Sent by God: His People on His Mission

LESSON 13: Values—Equipping and Empowering for Every Member Ministry

Our Values

Six values guide this church and give us identity. These reflect our mission and shape us as a church. This lesson concludes our 'values' study. Only one lesson remains in the series: next week we will summarize our vision, mission, and values in a lesson entitled "Resurrected Living."

Here is a summary of the values we have studied.

Truth. We value truth, we value biblical teaching. This commitment calls us to be *approved workers*.

Unity. We value unity, we seek peaceful harmony. We seek unity in God's Spirit as *spiritual brothers*.

Touch. Because God wants to touch, love and care for his world, we value caring evangelism. God touches our world through us, his *ambassadors*.

Christian Living. To live like Jesus acknowledges that he calls us to be like him, his *disciples*.

Love. Our desire to love like Jesus shows in all our relationships, but especially in our commitment to be the *family of God*.

Ministry. We want to equip and empower one another, recognizing that all are called to be *servants*.

Ministry That Matters

One church has on its marquee in the place where the minister's name would normally appear: "Minister—every member". Jesus came to serve, not to be served. Those who follow him are also servants. God's plan for his church includes "every member ministry". The effective involvement of every member requires that the church equip and empower the every member for service. Church leaders must be willingly to equip and empower the church rather than seeking to control. This church seeks excellence in our service to God, one another, and others. Because God calls all of his children to be

servants, we encourage one another toward gift-oriented service.

Excellence in Ministry Combines Equipping and Empowering

The church should strive toward excellence in all it does. God does not desire or honor mediocrity. Ephesians 4 affirms several things. Christ provides gifts to the body in the gifts given to the members; one role of leadership is to equip the members for ministry or service; the result of ministry is the growth of the body.

A properly-functioning body is self-edifying, working and growing in harmony and sacrificial service. The picture Paul paints of the church in this text requires that members be equipped and empowered.

Where Did We Lose Our Way?

Somewhere along the way, we seem to have lost our way. Today, the majority of the work in the church is done by a small minority of members. We hire 'ministers' to do too much of what needs to be done. Individual church members have become consumers of religion rather than participants or providers. We too often come to church in 'self-seeking' mode. We expect to be ministered to more than to minister. We expect 'ministers' to provide our needs, and the needs of specific demographic groups: children, singles, youth, college, young adults, older folks...some days the list seems endless.

Our return to the model of New Testament Christianity demands that we return to 'every member ministry.' No member of the body is unimportant or useless. Every member is needed. The church with an inactive member is lame and hindered.

The body functions as one, with many members (1 Cor. 12:12). The body is composed of members with many different functions and gifts, e.g. eyes, feet, hands, mouth.

