

Team Ministry 01

Dr. Bob Abramson

Notes 

Foundations

Effective ministry to others has its foundations in us. Our preaching... our teaching... our music... our counseling - all provide many impressions to our hearers. The most prominent impression comes not from our ministry skills or the sounds of our voices. First and foremost, our audiences will watch us publicly displaying ourselves. They will look carefully, even as they listen. As we communicate our message, we also communicate what is inside of us and who we really are. Therefore, it is our responsibility to others (and even more so to the Lord) to insure that who we are - is who Christ wants us to be. When people look at us, they ought to see Jesus.

Let us ask ourselves three questions:

- A. What are our purposes as a ministry team?**
- B. What are our goals?**
- C. How can we achieve these?**

A. What are our purposes as a ministry team?

Another way to put this question is... What does God want from us that caused Him to call us to ministry?

God designed ministry to be best done as a group activity. (Why does any group gather together and prepare for a public presentation of their ministry, whether it is preaching, teaching, singing, drama, dance, etc.?) Are His primary reasons for gathering us together...

- To minister to others?
- To minister to Him?
- To be a part of a program that builds to a sermon and an altar call?
- To minister to each other? (If so, why?)
- To have a great time - To enjoy the presence of God and to help each other (and others) to relieve or forget the daily pressures of life?
- To build relationships with each other (If so, why?)

To help define team ministry and its dynamics, we typically turn to [Ephesians, 4:11-16](#).

(Ephesians 4:11-16 NKJV) “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, {13} till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; {14} that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, {15} but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; {16} from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

Make your ministry an act of worship toward the Lord.

How can your ministry team fulfill the meaning and expression of God’s purposes, as it works together with the other five-fold ministries? The answer lies clearly within your call. Each person on the ministry team and thus, each team has a distinct, unique contribution to the plans and purposes of God. Knowing this should encourage us, and form our attitudes and actions in ways that please the Lord.

- We are tasked with being part of a life-changing encounter with God. This explains why God created us to be attracted to, and gifted in the areas of ministry we function in.
- The primary Audience for our ministry is always God. Consider the ministry of praising and worshiping God, which we all have. We may not all be in the team of music ministers, or in the choir, but all ministers of the Gospel exist to glorify and magnify the King of Kings. It is our duty and our privilege to praise Him. Every act of ministry (individual and team) ought to praise God.

(Psalm 57:9 NKJV) “I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.”

“I will sing to You”

(Psalm 71:23 The New Living Translation) “I will shout for joy and sing your praises, for you have redeemed me.”

- After we direct our ministry to God, we are tasked by the Lord to direct ourselves toward people, and to speak for Him. (We understand our ministry does, indeed, fall on the ears of our hearers, but they are not our primary assignment - God is!) In whatever our team does, God wants people to see us worshiping Him, and be drawn into doing the same. If we look to Jesus, they will look to Jesus. When they see us, they ought to see Him in us. Make the purpose and practices of your team acts of worship toward the Lord.

A Key Element of Ephesians 4:11-16

“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” (Verse 12)

Team Ministry: An Expression of God’s Plan in Action: “Equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry”

As teams in the church, our primary ministry assignment, and indeed, part of every assignment, is to strive to present Christ with excellence. In whatever way our team functions, it ought to draw people to God. If they are, they will be drawn into a worship experience with Him! **We all will encounter Jesus together! We will find Him in those we minister to... and among those we minister with.** Here is what happens with godly team ministry:

- We work together to become excellent in our expression of ministry (which is really an expression of worship.).
- Our ministry expression (as an act of worship) draws us closer to God - to the things of God, and to each other. Our team bonds together and we share much in common.
- As we “do the work of the ministry,” we express agape love among ourselves and those we minister to. We enjoy the results together. All this happens in the fellowship we experience, as we work together for His glory.

An Inward Expression

Fellowship among those on the team can be viewed as an inward expression of “the work of the ministry.” The “saints” (in this case, our team members) are equipped, and we grow into complete, mature persons - We are “perfected.”

An Outward Expression

Our “work” among the body of Christ causes people to be edified when they experience us ministering to them and fellowshiping with them. As a team, we become progressively better able to influence those we minister to, first in word, but also in deed. As individuals, we also become better able to minister in private and personal contacts outside of the ministry context.

Choices for a Scriptural Baseline of Team Ministry

Scripturally speaking, all choices made in team ministry about what to do and how to do it should wrap themselves around these two actions:

(1) Equipping ourselves (2) Edifying others

These two actions do not preclude other actions from happening that are completely valid. Equipping and edifying establish the Scriptural baseline we are to concentrate our ministry efforts upon. The task at hand, then, is to determine whether our present choices are equipping us and edifying others. We must strive to insure that future choices do the same.

B. What are our Goals as a Ministry Team?

Three Goals for Ministry Happening *within* our Team

(Ephesians 4:13 NKJV) “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

First Team Goal: Unity

A Command Obeyed and a Lifestyle Displayed

Unity is a word that is overused and under-practiced. God intends it to be **a command obeyed and a lifestyle displayed**. Our ministry community should bond in such a way that adversity will never overcome us, and familiarity will never cause us to take each other for granted. We are each other’s blessings! Issues and strife will inevitably rear their ugly heads, but there is never a more important priority than unity.

Second Team Goal: Filled with the Knowledge of His Will

Ephesians 4:13 invites us to come to *“the knowledge of the Son of God.”* What does this mean for us as a team? How will we apply it to our lives? As we spend time together, we discover how we can be more like Jesus and more faithful to His desires for our lives. It is a shared experience, founded on the priority for knowing the will of God for us together.

(Colossians 1:9-12 (NKJV) “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; {10} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; {11} strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; {12} giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”

1. Times of learning and Bible study together as a ministry team are not optional!

God is interested in making wise and spiritually discerning sons and daughters (Verse 9).

2. A worthy walk is a fruitful team walk (Verse 10).

We are to be fruitful in every good work. This term is to be applied both to our inward and outward expressions of ministry as a team. It also applies to our individual works. The primary consideration here, as with any other portion of our lives, is to ask... Is the work *“fully pleasing Him?”*

3. Take note of the progression of faithfulness to His call.

(Verse 11): We are supplied strength, then patience, then joy, then thanksgiving! **Result: We are qualified “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.”**

Third Team Goal: A Deeper Experience in God

Our third team goal (regardless of how our team functions in the body of Christ) is the most emotionally attractive - to be

overwhelmed by the presence of God... to be smothered in the anointing and swept away by the joy. Collectively, we benefit tremendously as we do this. We become living epistles in a book of love, a book of holiness and a book of awesome joy. Together, these make a book of worship toward God. We are forever changed together, and individually too!

The greatest experiences we ever have are our encounters with God. One touch from His hand, one moment in His glory, one showering of His anointing... these are the greatest emotional gifts we could ever enjoy on this side of heaven.

Spiritual Math

Unity + the Knowledge of His Will + a Deeper Experience in God = “a Perfect Man”

When these three goals are achieved, we become what the Bible refers to as “*a perfect man.*” This perfect man is measured by “*the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (*Ephesians 4:13*). To put it another way, we mature together (in ways we never could without each other) as sons and daughters of God. We assess our maturity through the presence of unity, the knowledge of His will, and the wonders of our ongoing experiences with Him (*Ephesians 4:15 & 16*).

C. Practical Steps to accomplishing our Team Purposes and achieving our Team Goals -

Three Identifying Ingredients

First Ingredient: TEACHING for Growth

Teaching for growth requires regular, structured time, in which team members contribute their gifts to teach the Word to the group. This requires the pastor or team leader to be discerning in selecting members of the team to teach. (Be careful not to put a novice or one who has bad doctrine into this position.)

Teaching may be in the form of topical instruction or devotional interaction. It might occur each time the team meets for planning or devotions.

The pastor or team leader should resist the temptation to dominate the teaching. He or she has a biblical mandate to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Regular rotation of those who teach will bring fresh perspectives to the group. Team members will have the opportunity to develop and express their teaching gifts. Guest teachers and facilitators ought to be brought in, to speak into the lives of the team and bring perspectives not otherwise available.

Second Ingredient: LIVING for Community (The Team Neighborhood)

No Cliques, No Bias, No Favoritism

The Scriptures give us significant, precise understanding about the ministry team thriving as a community of God's people. The key to team ministry is unity and harmony, fostered by caring for and appreciating the value of each member of the team.

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 (The New Living Translation) "Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part... {20} Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. {21} The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." {22} In fact, some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary. {23} And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect from the eyes of others those parts that should not be seen, {24} while other parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together in such a way that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. {25} This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally. {26} If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad."

Unity provides the team members with the opportunity to mature, change, and become more like Jesus. Everyone is joined together, with each contributing to the group in the way God designed. The result is community, a team neighborhood, which grows and edifies itself. We care for each other equally - no cliques, no bias, no favoritism. We go out of our way to include everyone, to care for everyone, to love everyone in our

ministry team. **We become a ministry community - a safe, secure and motivating neighborhood.** Our ministry community then broadcasts its “fullness” to the world around it. New members of the community are attracted, who enter into the same loop as those of us already involved.

Community is always a key issue to God. He wants to cultivate the reality of team community in an *ever-deepening* sense. In other words, we go to the next level - the next level of the expression of His love!

A Neighborhood in the Spirit

The team meets as a spiritual community that submits itself to God, *and to each other*. We form a neighborhood in the Spirit. Take note that God is in the neighborhood. He is one of the residents. The community exercises and reflects *“the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace”* (Ephesians 4:3).

Ways to accomplish a solid Neighborhood in the Spirit could include the following:

1. Group Devotional Interaction

As we meet, we are to involve ourselves in group devotions concerning the things of God (‘see above).

2. Accountability Partners

Every member of the team should have a set time to speak and pray with another member (same sex only) to share their lives with each other, and submit to be accountable to each other. This will take time to develop. We do this by prayerfully submitting one issue to each other and working through that issue until a door opens up for another.

3. Covenant

We are to establish and carry out a covenant commitment to be family for the seasons we are in team ministry together. This means we make a pledge not to reject or have a spirit of judgment toward each other. We are to accept each other just the way we are.

(Ephesians 1:3-6 (NKJV) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual

blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, {4} just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, {5} having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, {6} to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

“That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...”

Third Ingredient: PRAYING for His Presence

Strong, consistent, anointed prayer ministry must be foundational to every team. *God is only obligated to come down among us when He hears our cries to going up to Him.* We can never take His presence for granted. This key principle is illustrated in Exodus 3:1-8 (The New Living Translation):

(Exodus 3:1-8 NLT) “One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he went deep into the wilderness near Sinai, the mountain of God. {2} Suddenly, the angel of the LORD appeared to him as a blazing fire in a bush. Moses was amazed because the bush was engulfed in flames, but it didn’t burn up. {3} “Amazing!” Moses said to himself. “Why isn’t that bush burning up? I must go over to see this.” {4} When the LORD saw that he had caught Moses’ attention, God called to him from the bush, “Moses! Moses!” “Here I am!” Moses replied. {5} “Do not come any closer,” God told him. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” {6} Then he said, “I am the God of your ancestors--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he hid his face in his hands because he was afraid to look at God. {7} Then the LORD told him, “You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. {8} So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey--the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites live.”

“I have heard their cries... So I have come...”

Cries of hunger for God are not optional in a successful team!

Three experiences will follow our prayers, *if* we use our team prayer time to seek the face of God.

1. We will experience an ever-increasing sense of holiness among us.

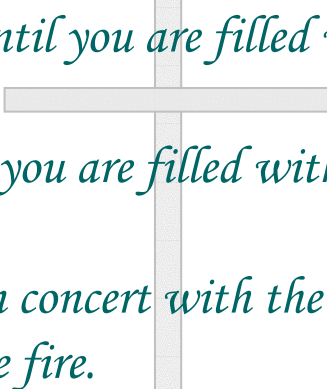
This will radically transform our individual relationships with God. It will forever change our team.

2. We will be a people of faith - together, a team that is all God wants it to be.

3. We will be overwhelmed with the fire of God.

Our hearts will ignite with a zeal about which we have only previously dreamed. It will forever change the power and anointing in our lives!

We can only imagine what will follow after we have encountered these three experiences, above. We will be ready to travel into deep places with God and with each other. We will have a taste of heaven and our lives will be empowered to give that taste to others!

- 
- *You won't see the angels until you are filled with a sense of holiness.*
 - *You won't hear them until you are filled with a sense of repentance and humility.*
 - *Your ministry won't sing in concert with the angels until you are filled with the fire.*