

Philosophy of Ministry

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The Holy Spirit gave me the scripture for my statement of faith, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and the recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free (Luke 4:18).” Before we are called to be in any position of leadership, we are called to be in a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. The call comes at various times in life and most callings are made when people are busy doing other vocations. Because of my relationship with Christ, I can work on the mission of being a blessing to my family through prayer, giving godly counsel, and living a life that honors God by being an example for my children, grandchildren and siblings. In my youth, I grew up in a Christian home and attended Sunday school regularly. Over the years, I continued in several ministries which I know now was for character building and training. My spiritual bond continued to deepen as I stayed connected, committed, and faithful in my relationship with Christ. There were times of challenges, disappointments, tests, and trials but the key for me was to run to Christ especially in times of difficulty, storms, and uncertainty. The valley experiences were the training ground where sometimes I rested and reflected as I faced the mountain experiences in life. My journey to the place that God is calling me to in ministry has not always been smooth, yet He has promised through the prophet (Isaiah 49:11), “I will make each of My mountains a road.” So I can rest and know that no matter how difficult or steep the situation may be, He is leveling it out. The body of Christ, the church, is called to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. During my seasons of preparation I must follow His leading and timing and learn to always trust Him. After completing Bible college and being ordained as an evangelist, I thought that it was all that God was requiring of me. However, God was speaking to me to enter seminary. I did not know why, yet, after running away from it until I could no longer run, I submitted to His

will. I really did not know at this season of life how God would use me in ministry, especially when I was in class surrounded by mostly pastors that were deeply involved in ministry. I had no desire to be a pastor or plant a church, so I really struggled with being in seminary. I had been attending for quite some time and had completed over three-fourths of the required course before God placed in my spirit the desire to minister as a chaplain.

The United States has the largest number of incarcerated people in the world because of the changes in the laws and policies that upgraded the levels of crimes. In the words of Lennie Spitale author of *Prison Ministry*, “We have all sinned, and no person is the sum total of the sins he or she has committed.” The Bible tells us that Jesus said, “I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me [with help and ministering care]; I was in prison, and you came to Me [ignoring personal danger]” (Matthew 25:34 Amplified Bible). Since, we are to reach the lost; I proclaim that I have been lead accordingly. The work that is close to my heart is to reach those that are incarcerated or are not able to gather within the church building but desire to hear and develop a closer relationship with God.

Describe your philosophy of ministry

As a part of the body of Christ, the church is mandated to go into the world. As an evangelist, I am to give emotional or spiritual support where needed. The local church has a variety of ministries that are required according to the Great Commission to go into the world and teach all nations. The spiritual gifts entrusted to me are to be used for the uplifting of the kingdom of God. As part of the five-fold ministry, I am called not only to be fed but to go and feed the lost with words of encouragement. This takes me outside of the church building and into the community as well. My spiritual development began with a local Baptist church where I became active in several ministries such as the Usher Board, Missionaries, Willing Workers and the Deaconess Board. Prayer was one thing that I was taught as a child that has always and

continues to be a constant in my life. I was told to ask God when I had a question and needed answers. Although I was not always living holy, I was encouraged to maintain a relationship through prayer. While serving as a deaconess, I spent a lot of time in prayer. My position as the assistant chairperson was to facilitate prayer vigils. Prayer is a lifestyle for me. In the words of Richard J. Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*, “The discipline of prayer brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit.” Prayer is one of the disciplines that we are commanded to do continually according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Continual prayer involves praying when things are good, bad, happy or sad. Prayer was what Jesus did often with the Father. As an introvert, spending time alone and seeking directions through prayer is an activity that I am drawn to do. I am invigorated when I spend time in prayer. As a newly appointed leader with no prior leadership experience seeking the wisdom and will of God for the ministry that I was assigned to has been a priority for me. The more time I spend in prayer I will gain power to do the tasks that have been set before me.

Desiring to increase my biblical knowledge I enrolled in an extension of the North Carolina College of Theology in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania under the late Rev. Dr. Bishop William E. Lee. He was also a Chaplain at the Monroe County Correctional Facility where several students were permitted to have religious services with the inmates. I was ordained as an evangelist in a local Pennsylvania church in October 2010. I was consecrated as a deaconess in February 2013 in New York where I taught Sunday School. In addition I ministered to women, led prayer shut-ins, helped with water baptism, visited the sick (home, hospital, nursing home) and ministered to the incarcerated. God has allowed me extensive growth in various areas of ministry in the last two years. As an ordained licensed Evangelist, I served as a volunteer involved with the New York State Correction and Community Services Program, where I ministered to the spiritual needs of the incarcerated. Ministry in the community included visiting

the nursing homes to have fellowship, with those that are unable to get to their house of worship, but desire to attend service. As a minister in training in my local church, I am the newly appointed chairperson for the Justice Ministry. This ministry is designed to minister to the incarcerated and their families. My spiritual calling is helping to give emotional or spiritual support where needed or asked for. Often family members and friends come to me for advice or want me to listen to their concerns. Helping others give me great joy especially when they ask for prayer or are willing to accept prayer when I extend the offer at the end of the conversation. I enjoy connecting people that need services such as jobs, housing, or medical care with various resources. This presents me the opportunity to utilize skills that I developed over the years while working in city government. My spiritual development has been deepened and enhanced by the influence of several ministers, class instructors, and peers.

While I was employed with the New York City Housing Authority, Hurricane Sandy hit the residents of several housing developments in 2012. Tenants in various locations were hit very hard with the loss of power and water. I was presented with the opportunity to go in the field in the Red Hook housing development to see if any residents needed services. Due to the loss of power I walked up a high-rise building knocking on doors to see if any tenants that had not evacuated needed water, medicine, food, or other emergency supplies and if they wanted to leave or remain in place. As a nurturer and mentor, the ability to offer support and encouragement was an opportunity to use gifts that enabled me to help define my life's calling. My spiritual calling is helping to give emotional or spiritual support where needed or asked for.

My internship at a woman's emergency intake shelter gave me the opportunity to develop and utilize skills in pastoral care. I was able to provide the guests with essential services and supplies that they needed for the night. I was able to provide spiritual care for those seeking advice and moral support. There was also the opportunity to provide conflict resolution on

several occasions with overnight guests. While serving in the shelter, I developed a deeper understanding of the homeless and vulnerable population that resulted in an ability to engage without fear. I was able to support and work with the various supervisor staff members demonstrating the ability embrace change and support leadership. In addition, I was able to provide support to various staff members in family crisis by listening, asking questions, and offering support. That was a very humbling, satisfying, and rewarding experience as I was being of service to those that were in crises.

What are perceived strengths?

Being placed in a leadership position just before we went into quarantine did not give me any time to have an introduction and first meeting with members of the ministry. The initial contact was conducted by an email followed up with telephone calls. Unaware of any activities or plans from the outgoing chairperson my initial goal at the time was to pray and see how God wanted to use this ministry. Using the leadership assessment survey by John C. Maxwell on “How to Gauge Your Current Level of Leadership” I was able to access areas of strengths and weaknesses that I need to improve on. When I spoke with the team members, I started with a friendly tone just to let them know that I am doing a wellness check and that I am praying for them. I tried to keep it personal with the individual and let him/her know that I was genuinely concerned about them. Based on an assessment in *Live Your Calling*, my ability to persevere during COVID and return to the shelter reinforces my level of commitment and dedication to want to help those in need. My work at present as a full-time student is to gain strategies and techniques so I can apply them to become a better leader for the team. We can share various views of how we can work together to accomplish the mission of the ministry that should enhance the church’s mission statement. As I continue to learn and gain strength, I will continue to share and encourage members on the ministry team. I have discovered that sometimes when I

am doing my check in, various members have concerns that they are facing and really appreciate the call or text. The vision that I have for the ministry will be shared with my senior leadership before it is introduced to the ministry so that I will be in order. The assessments that I have taken in this class has helped me to better know and understand the personal, leader, and spiritual “me”. In addition reading and completing the assessments in the book, *Why You Do What You Do* by Bobb Biehl I learned how to identify my single greatest strength which is key to being able to be an effective leader. I believe in respecting everyone even if we have different views on life. The main reason is because God created everyone in His image and when we mistreat or disrespect others, we are disrespecting God. There are no perfect people but there is a perfect God, and the Bible asks the question, “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?” (Luke 6:32 ESV). It is not an easy challenge especially now when we see the injustice and hate all around the world, but as we know, there is nothing new under the sun. Jesus was hated as He walked the earth, yet He was willing to die for everyone. So as a true Christian I try to follow the example laid out before me. It is very important to me that when I say I am going to do something that I follow through with it. This character-building trait and trust within the group and among others that I am in contact with will go a long way. In the event that I am not able to fulfill an obligation for any reason, as soon as I become aware of it, I inform those that are affected. I realize that whenever I am successful in achieving a goal(s) that it is not only my strength, gifts and ability but that I had help all the way from God and those that support me. Someone was praying, someone was encouraging, someone was mentoring, and someone was hoping that I was going to fail, yet that was the incentive to keep me moving forward. At the present time, based on Maxwell’s leadership assessment I am on a level one (position). Those skills allowed me to be approachable, open with an accepting attitude and able to collaborate with the team. I use empathy, praise for good work and deliver and receive constructive feedback

as a part of communication with them. People feel comfortable coming to me with their concerns knowing that their privacy will be maintained. This level gives me the opportunity moving forward to see what is required to be successful at higher levels and to work toward building on the requirements. Once we can come together as a team in the building, I plan to continue utilizing the Maxwell and Biehl assessments as tools to gain information for building the ministry team and myself. That will enable me to identify others that have the skills that I need help with and that they possess. The top spiritual gifts that I possess according to the Life Calling Map are evangelism, encouragement, helps, and intercession. Using my gift of discernment is also very helpful to establish a highly effective team. My volunteer experiences in prisons, nursing homes, and shelters have motivated me to pursue a chaplaincy position. I believe that the experiences that I gained will enable me to be better equipped to do ministry in my church and community. Due to COVID, I am not sure when regulations will lift or when people will feel comfortable or safe enough to revisit prisons or nursing homes. Therefore it is necessary currently that we create other ways of ministering to the institutionalized. The option of being a pen pal is an idea to consider, however, for privacy purposes personal information such as addresses, and telephone numbers should not be disclosed.

What are perceived weaknesses?

Just as the Lord told Jeremiah, “Do not say you’re too young,” I am young in leadership, but I trust and know that He is giving me all the people and tools to accomplish His will. My unwillingness to ask for help is an area that I need to embrace. I know that no man or woman is an island unto themselves and everyone needs help from time to time. Therefore, to enhance my administrative skills I will receive the training and mentoring that is required to complete the assignments He has for me. Time management is an area that I can improve on greatly also. Knowing that everything is time sensitive I must learn to prioritize projects according to their

urgency. In the words of Brennfleck for me to have an INTJ personality type I must “trust in my own insights, have faith that I see into the true meaning behind events, and have a willingness to bring my insight into practical real-world application.” Another area of perceived weakness is that I fail to speak up and am not always willing to share my thoughts for various reasons. This lack of confidence seemingly results from some financial obligations and academic pressures to finish within a specified time frame.

What implications does your philosophy have for you as a leader?

Looking at the patriots in the Bible, God always provided the necessary people, tools and resources for His will to be accomplished. Therefore I am reminded according to Proverbs 3:5 and 6, to “Trust in the Lord will all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” As a leader, I realize it is not my ministry, but God’s. It is not my way, but God’s way. It is how God wants to use me to tell those He has chosen for me to work with and minister to. My role is to tell of His unmerited grace, enduring mercy, and agape love. All the techniques reviewed and studied during this course of study is equipping me with what I need to manage the Justice ministry.

As I continue to progress in ministry, the core values that are most important to me begin with being committed to any project that I believe God has placed in my spirit to undertake. Working with God has developed my integrity and respect for others. The values of responsibility and dependability have increased the trust received from others. These values are needed for leadership and they are values that I will not compromise. As a leader, team members will be willing to work with people that have high morals. This is very important because the vision that has been given to me should be shared so others will be willing to work along side me. Next is my passion for what I do. I want to do things that bring honor and please God. There have been losses along the way, but regardless of the disappointments or losses I will continue to stand firm

in the faith of my mission no matter what. I will continue to encourage those that I encounter in my daily walk and ministry because life is full of challenges and oftentimes a word of encouragement is what is needed to keep them from giving up on a situation. To know that someone cares and is concerned and expects nothing in return is life changing.

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