

Philosophy of Ministry Paper

A. Character-“Being Faithful with the Little”

In Clinton’s book, “The Making of a Leader”, the author asserts that, “Our greatest challenge as leaders is to develop Godly character¹”. The foundation of leadership is character. There are 4 important process items that the Lord uses to test character: (1) Integrity checks, (2) Obedience checks, (3) Word checks, and (4) Ministry tasks. A word that the Lord gave me not only served as a word check but also a obedience check and a integrity check. The word that God gave me directly and confirmed through other Christian leaders is “If you are faithful in the little things, you will be faithful in the large ones” (Luke 16:10). Being faithful in the little things means not only being faithful with our money by using our resources to help others, but also being faithful with our time with ministry tasks that we are given.

For instance, I was given the ministry task of serving as an assistant Chaplain at Bowery Mission in East Harlem, New York. Through being faithful with the ministry task of helping the homeless, and those with trauma and mental illness, I have seen a lot of good fruit come out of this experience. By ministering and helping the men’s population at the Bowery Mission through teaching and preaching God’s word and using the spiritual disciplines of prayer, worship, and reading and meditating on scripture, I saw men’s lives transformed! Through proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel, prayer and worship, I was able to see men’s lives changed dramatically in a short period of time. Men that were previously angry were now loving. Men that were unforgiving were now forgiving. And men that were prideful were now humble. In addition, I was able to help my spiritual formation team deliver on results by teaching and coaching and mentoring them on using the spiritual disciplines to minister and help

¹ Clinton, Robert. The Making of a Leader. Tyndale House Publishers, 2018.

the men's population at Bowery Mission. Also, through my teaching and preaching gifts, I was able to help my team prepare and deliver sermons and bible studies to the men's population at the Bowery Mission. By being faithful with the little, this resulted in me helping the team but also seeing men's lives changed.

By being "faithful with the little", God has put me in charge of more things including a Adult Small e-group Men's Bible Study for the Elevation Church and a healing ministry to help those faced with mental health issues and drug addictions heal and recover. By hearing God's word, obeying God's commands given through his word and putting God's word into action, he has not only developed my character but also helped me to grow and develop with my ministry responsibilities.

B. Statement of Faith

What we believe about God, how God relates to us, and how we relate to God is foundational. We wholeheartedly serve God and the people around the globe.

Personally, I believe there is only one God, who is perfect, existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut 6:4; Matt 5:48; Matt 28:19).

Jesus Christ is both fully divine and fully human (Philippians 2:6-11). He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:34-38). He died for sinners so they could be rescued and have a relationship with the Father (1 Peter 3:18), as a suitable atonement for sin (Hebrew 2:9), and since we are justified by our faith in him and his shed blood (Romans 5:9). By God's power, he rose from the dead (Acts 2:23-24). He now sits at the right hand of our majestic God in heaven (Heb 8:1). He will return as our high priest to establish his Kingdom, righteousness, and peace (Matt 26:64). The Holy Spirit who lives inside us (John

14:15-18) is sent to guide, teach, and empower the believer (John 16:13; Acts 1:8), and convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgement (John 16:7-11).

The scriptures were God inspired and are a complete revelation of his salvation for humankind. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Tim 3:15-16).

Although man was created in the image of God (Gen 1:27); he fell away from God through disobedience resulting in physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature (Romans 3:23), and can be saved only through Jesus's atoning work on the cross (1 Cor 15:21-23). The unrepentant and unbelievers will exist forever in torment (Rev 21:8); and the believer will live in eternal blessing (Rev 21:1-4).

God gave us forgiveness for our sins, saved us, and gave us a new life filled with the Holy Spirit. He also gives us assurance that we have eternal life. He did this because of his mercy. Those who put their trust in him will be children of God (Titus 3:4-7).

Through the redemptive work of Jesus, he made it possible for our bodies to be made whole and healed of sickness and to cast out demons (Matt 8:16-17). Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the scriptures and are priviledges for the church in the present day (James 5:13-16).

God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church has been commissioned by Jesus to go and make disciples of all the nations and preach the gospel (Matt

28: 19-20). The community of believers devoted themselves to teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's supper), and to prayer (Acts 2:42-2:47).

C. Core Ministry Values

My philosophy of ministry that I present in this paper includes the core values of character (discussed in Part A of this paper), worship, healing and deliverance, and community. The following section will explain each of the core ministry values further and affirm it with biblical evidence and information.

Worship

First, I would like to explain my theology of worship.

Worship is Informed By Biblical Principles

Part I of Acts 2 focuses on the coming of the Holy Spirit. The other day, we had high winds in our geographic area. Similarly on the Day of Pentecost when God fulfilled Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28), people in ancient times heard the sound of a violent wind that let them know that something out of the ordinary was happening. This historical event resulted in a huge crowd coming to the location where the disciples were gathered. The Holy Spirit came openly and with visible and audible signs to accompany his coming.

The Holy Spirit filled the early believers and they were given power and anointed to witness and to proclaim the gospel. Likewise, we need to be filled with power of the Holy Spirit if we are to witness and preach the gospel with boldness today.

The first principle that is drawn from Acts 2 is worship is informed by biblical principles in the gospel. During the Day of Pentecost, early believers divided worship into 2 parts: The Liturgy of

the Word focused on preaching and Liturgy of the Upper Room which included the Lord's Supper (communion). Chapell affirms this and states, "Just as Church leaders have structured their buildings to reflect an understanding of the gospel, they have also structured church worship to reflect an understanding of the gospel²". Another instance demonstrating the connection between the gospel and the structure of church worship is the relationship of the patterns of worship with different liturgies (ie: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Westminster Abbey) and God's word. Chapell states that, "The Roman Catholic Liturgy is foundational for most subsequent liturgies in western culture²". To this end, as early as the 2nd Century, the Roman Liturgy was divided into 2 main parts related to the word and sacrament.

Worship is Informed By Diverse Cultures

The second principle that is drawn from Acts 2 is worship is informed by diverse cultures. After the early believers were filled with the Holy Spirit they began to speak in the native languages of the people that gathered. This second principle is affirmed by scripture in Acts 2:5-8 which asserts, "At that time, there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running and they were bewildered to hear their own language being spoken by the believers...These people are all from Galilee but we hear them speaking in our own language about the wonderful things God has done!"

Community of Believers

Secondly, we want to explain our theology of the community of believers. The analysis and discussion focuses on Acts 2:42

What does it mean to be a community of believers?

² Chapell, Brian. Christ-centered Worship: Letting Gospel Shape Our Practice. Baker Academic, 2017.

Acts 2:42 says, “ All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s supper), and to prayer.

- (a) Teaching: Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16 asserts that, “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”

While people in ancient times believed that deities could inspire prophecies and even poetry, Jewish people acknowledged that God’s spirit inspired scripture. For example, Greeks did not all agree regarding the implications of inspiration. Jews on the other hand argued that the Scriptures in the Bible were inspired by God. The Pentateuch was the first divinely prompted literary collection recognized as scripture by the Hebrew community³. For this purpose, it is the most important division of the Hebrew canon. It always stands first in the 3-part division of the Old Testament: Law, Prophet, and Writings.

It is important to emphasize that Paul and other Christians were under serious persecution in Rome and, in Ephesus and that false teaching was becoming more prevalent. For this reason, Paul highlights in 1 Timothy 3:16, teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. He is looking to call people away from false teaching back to the truth found in scripture. The outcome of this is spelled out in 2 Tim 3:17: “So that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.”

³ Hill, A.E. and Walton, J.H. A Survey of the Old Testament. Zondervan, 2009.

(b) Fellowship: John 15:4 states, “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.” What this means is that we need to be in perfect union and fellowship with God. Just as a branch needs to be attached to the vine so that it is supplied by the vine and can bear fruit, we need to be in union with God so we can bear much fruit. Also, we are called to be in relationship and fellowship with other believers (Acts 2:43-45). We are called to serve one another and carry each other’s burdens (Gal 6:2). Jesus came to make one family of all those he saved, and so he is remaking us into a new people (2 Cor 5:17). Jesus came to bring Christian believers into one body called the church or Christian community (Greek word ekklesia). Jesus did what God proclaimed in John’s vision: “Your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9). Jesus also fulfilled the promise that was given to Abraham to make him into a great nation (Gen 12:1-3). This new community of believers welcomes all who have become Christians by their faith in Jesus-at no distinction is made regarding color, culture or gender (John 17:11; 1 Cor 12:13; 2 Cor 5:17).

With this understanding, the community is called to build up one another, acting with zeal from their faith in, hope in and love for God. When God has blessed members of the community with possession, they are called to share it with one another.

(c) Meal (communion): Mark 14:12-26: Jesus’s Last Supper- As Christians of the present day, we observe “Communion” or the “Lord’s Last Supper”, which follows the last Passover meal Jesus shared with his followers. The Passover reminds the Jews on how God delivered them from slavery in Egypt, while the Lord’s Supper reminds us

how we were delivered from slavery to sin. It also reminds us of the debt that Jesus had to pay for our sins.

Acts 2:46 “Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts”.

(d) Prayer: The Lord’s Prayer-Luke 11: Jesus taught the disciples how to pray with a model prayer (Luke 11:1-4). “Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.” We are recognizing our relationship with God. He is our father. Also, we pray in humble submission to him-hallowed be your name. May your kingdom come (Luke 11:2). We pray with faith that God will provide for our needs-Give us this day our daily bread (Luke 11:3). We pray with a repentant heart and ask God forgiveness and that forgives others-And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial (Luke 11:4).

One of the most profound ways to pray is with Scripture. Praying with Scripture can help us to store God’s word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11). The psalms give us language for praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 8;145), for lament (Psalm 44;74), for repentance (Psalm 6;51), and even for handling anger against those wrong us (Psalm 10;109). The Bible speaks from God to us, and it also gives us the words for us to speak to God. Often times prayer is sitting in quiet, seeking God’s presence and listening to his voice. It is also about crying out to God about our deepest hurts and emotions, like David did in his psalms he wrote.

Acts 2:47 “Praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

Why should we pray? God says through his word that we should pray. The Bible says, “Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open” (Matthew 7:7). “Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

Healing and Deliverance

Next, healing and deliverance are also two of my core values. My authority and influence as a leader in the church is also demonstrated by my personal victory over anxiety and depression. As a result of losing my job, financial situation, and domestic violence that I suffered, I got really bitter and angry. This was left unprocessed and went inward. The deep loss and pain underneath the bitterness led me to turn to some bad coping strategies including drinking, eating and spending. I was struggling with fear of rejection and lack of love and severe anxiety and depression, and everything felt like it was moving in slow motion. It was not until I got to a place where I could process the pain and grieve the losses and forgive that I was able to get freedom from the anxiety and depression. I learned that forgiveness is a matter of obedience and not a matter of faith (Luke 17:1-10). With this season of restoration and healing from anxiety and depression that the Lord brought me through, he refined my calling to not only be a pastor of a church but also help those facing mental health issues and drug addictions. The Lord has given me a fire and a passion to stand alongside those who are facing challenges with mental health issues and drug addictions with the help of the Holy Spirit’s restorative and healing power to help them heal and recover.

D. What are my non-negotiables?

My non-negotiables with ministry are as follows:

1. Character-“Be Faithful with the Little” (Luke 16:10)
2. Community of Believers (Acts 2:42)
3. Practicing the Spiritual Disciplines-Prayer, Worship and Reading/Meditating on Scripture
4. Deep Intimacy with God-John 15: “Abide in me and you will bear much fruit”
5. Be thankful in all circumstances
6. Faith over fear-John 4:18
7. Be secure in identity in Christ

Bibliography

1. Clinton, Robert. The Making of a Leader. Tyndale House Publishers, 2018.

2. Chapell, Brian. Christ-centered Worship: Letting Gospel Shape Our Practice. Baker Academic, 2017.
3. Hill, A.E. and Walton, J.H. A Survey of the Old Testament. Zondervan, 2009.