

Dear friend,

There was a time in the early years of my Christian life that I viewed “ministry” in a very narrow way. “Ministry”, in those days, were the activities and relationships that were intentionally engaged in for the purpose of sharing the gospel with the lost, building Christians in their faith or equipping Christians to share their faith or help others grow in their faith. The daily, mundane realities of life seemed to me to be interruptions and diversions from what really mattered. Changing the oil in the car, giving children baths, mowing the lawn, relating to my neighbors, paying the bills, preparing meals, repairing the water heater, all of these things were a waste of time and irrelevant to what “really” mattered unless I could somehow use them to share the gospel or teach Christians. I was simply doing what I think comes natural to humans. We tend to divide the world up into those things that are spiritual or sacred and those things that are unspiritual or secular. We tend to view certain activities as automatically religious in nature and other activities as automatically non-religious in nature.

Thankfully, as I kept reading my Bible, continued to read theological literature from the past and talk with other Christians about these things, my irrational and unbiblical view of ministry changed. The weight of passages like 1 Corinthians 10:31 & Col 3:17 convinced me I was wrong. “So then, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” All of my life matters to God. There is no part of my life that does not have the potential to display the glory of God and participate in his work of sustaining and redeeming his world.

It is because of this perspective that when I read a verse like Eph. 4:11-12 which says, “He appointed some to be...pastor-teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”, I do not think about equipping Christians to do religious or church oriented activities. Rather I view the task of the leadership of the church to be to equip Christians to be Christians all the time and in every location and task to which they are called. All of life is ministry. As Paul Tripp has said, you don’t step out of your life into ministry; rather all of your life is ministry all the time. Ministry is not what a few professionals and really motivated lay people do but what all of us do all the time.

It is this perspective that has been one of the dominate principles governing how we have structured our church. We have emphasized the relational dimension and the word centered dimension of the life of the church. We aim to be together on Sundays to worship the Lord and listen to his voice as his people. We aim for our homes to be places where the gospel is taught by parents to children and where the whole family daily worships Christ together. We want everyone to have the opportunity to fellowship with a diverse, small group of other believers each week around the word of God in order to encourage and build each other in the faith. We don’t want to be a church with a million programs that take people away from their real lives and living as Christians in the context of their actual, lived lives.

However, there are some things that must be done in order for us to provide the growing numbers of people the Lord is adding to us with the opportunities we all need to be more equipped to be Christians all the time. In short, there is work that needs to be done in order for us to be a church that equips all of God's people for all the works of ministry in all of life. We do not view these official church functions and tasks as somehow more important or spiritual than any of the tasks we all perform for Christ each moment of every day. However, such tasks do exist and if we are going to help a growing number of people grow in their delight in God, then we need to effectively plan and carry out a variety of activities.

We began last month to feature each of our Ministry Teams each month in the foyer on Sunday mornings. We are featuring each of these teams so that you can get a sense of all that is being done and all that yet needs doing, so that you will participate in one of the teams. It is our hope that every member and regular attendee of RHCC will be involved in at least one of these ministry teams. If all of us do a little bit, then no one will end up doing too much. Please be sure to stop by the table each month and get more information on the various ways our church is seeking to build a community that declares the greatness of God and serves others for joy and his honor. Then ask God which of the teams he would have you join.

In his mercy,