

Equipped for Ministry

Who We Are: August 2nd

I. Opening Prayer

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help your group learn and hear what He would teach and encourage

II. Weekly Sermon Discussion (20-40 minutes)

- Read the scriptures, and discuss what stood out to you.
- Engage with one another by reflecting and sharing what our Church is learning together.
- Example insights and questions are provided to help generate discussion if needed.

Focus your conversation on the scripture and how it applies to you. Be careful of straying off the topic, and if you do, encourage one another to ask “How does this scripture apply to this?”.

We are all called to the ministry

Read: Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 3:5-8, 21-22, 12:14-22

In scripture, the word translated as ‘ministry’ and ‘service’ is the Greek word *diakonia* (Strong's G1248). Ministry is service. We are all called to the ministry, because we are all called to service. This makes every believer an essential part of building up the body of Christ. Paul teaches that there is no hierarchy of calling, and warns us not to elevate people based on their calling. Everyone within the body of Christ is called to the essential work of ministry: service.

- Why does the church tend to elevate certain callings and how do the above scriptures correct that error?
- Who is it within the church that is called to the ‘work of the ministry’, and what is your role within that work?
- How does equating “ministry” to practical “serving” change your view of the importance of your work of service?
- What are the ministry opportunities that God has given you?
- How can your group support you in your ministry calling?

The equipping of ministry: The Motivational Spiritual Gifts

Read 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:3-8

Romans 12 lists seven spiritual gifts that are often called "motivational" or "serving" gifts because they describe how God has innately wired our personalities to view ministry. The church is dependent on these distinct internal drives to operate in unity and accomplish its goals. Since these gifts function like a lens through which we naturally see and respond to practical needs, they are all equal in value. Paul warns us to have sober judgment, demanding that we never elevate our own gift above another's or use our preferences to show favoritism by only serving certain people. Ultimately, every member has at least one of these grace-gifts,

and the health of the entire church body depends on each person choosing to actively step out in faith and employ their gifting.

- Which of the seven giftings do you see within yourself and your group?
- Why is this diversity of gifts required within the church for us to accomplish our mission?
- How does understanding this diversity of gifts help us attain unity, and avoid getting frustrated at how others respond to a ministry need?
- What does it look like practically to think of your gifts with 'sober judgment' and not elevate nor downplay your ministry gifting?
- Why is it important we don't fall into 'cliques' or 'favoritism' within the church?
- How can your group be in ministry together?

III. Share & Prayer (20-40 minutes)

Time to 'take off the mask'! Jesus doesn't want us to be hypocrites who wear masks.

- A personal life update, your current spiritual condition. Use emotional language to be real!
- Challenges or victories that you are experiencing
- What's really going on in your life? How are you doing? How can your group pray for you?
- Are there applications from the Discussion that you need prayer support?
- How can your Group support you this week?

When sharing prayer requests, include your personal prayer needs. Example – rather than simply sharing "Please pray for my friend's cancer journey", include personal prayer: "Please pray as I'm struggling with my friend's cancer journey, and I need guidance on how to encourage her in this season".

Have someone, or everyone, close your time out in prayer for one another.

Family Discipleship Ideas

We Are All Called to Ministry - The Human Body Puzzle

Have family members try to complete a simple task (like tying a shoe, pouring a glass of water, or drawing a picture) without using their thumbs, or while keeping their eyes closed.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-22. Discuss how hard it is for a body to function when one small part stops working. Explain that in God's eyes, a person serving behind the scenes (like cleaning or helping a neighbor) is just as vital as a pastor speaking on a stage.

For Kids: The Bible word for ministry is *diakonia*, which just means "serving others." Who are some people we see serving in our church that don't stand on a stage?

For Teens & Adults: Why do you think human culture naturally tries to create a hierarchy (ranking people from "most important" to "least important") even inside the church? How do Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 3:5-8 break down that hierarchy?

Family Ministry Challenge: "Secret Diakonia"

If "ministry" just means "practical serving," what are some small ministry opportunities right here in our neighborhood, for our family, or school this week?

Spend 10 minutes and brainstorm a practical act of service your family can do together or for each other this week (e.g., raking a neighbor's yard, baking cookies for church volunteers, or doing a sibling's chores without being asked).

Do it secretly or without expecting praise, remembering that serving is our calling to ministry.

The Motivational Spiritual Gifts - The Seven Lenses

Gather seven different household items that change how you see or interact with things (e.g., sunglasses, a magnifying glass, binoculars, a flashlight, a ruler, a tool, or a cleaning cloth). Label each with one of the 7 motivational gifts:

Prophecy/Perceiving (Truth-telling/Seeing right vs. wrong)

Serving/Ministry (Finding practical needs and fixing them)

Teaching (Searching out facts and sharing them clearly)

Exhortation/Encouraging (Motivating people to take action or heal)

Giving (Managing resources to generously share with others)

Leading/Administration (Organizing people and mapping out goals)

Mercy (Feeling others' pain and bringing comfort)

Talk about the function of each of these items; each is important and necessary.

Read Romans 12:3-8. Explain that God gives us these different "lenses" so that when our family or church encounters a problem, we all see a different way to help.

Pretend a family at church just had a new baby or is moving to a new house. How would a person with the gift of *Giving* respond? What about someone with the gift of *Serving*? Or *Encouraging*? Explore each of the gifts to show we need all of them!

Go around the room and talk about each family member. Which of these seven motivational drives or "lenses" do you naturally see operating in them?

Paul warns us to have "sober judgment" and not think of ourselves too highly. How can we accidentally show favoritism or look down on others if they don't share our specific spiritual "lens"?

Close by reading **1 Peter 4:10**. Have each family member hold an object representing their gift or desire to serve.

Pray together, thanking God for making your family diverse in design but united in purpose. Ask Him for opportunities to step out in faith and use these gifts this week.