

Called to the Ministry?

Pastor Mark Blair - BICF ZGC - April 2018

Call to Ministry is linked first of all, and most importantly, to our call to Christ.

Our “Identity” is as Son/Daughter before Servant, Philippians 3.8

Our walk with Him should be strong, apart from our “job” or “ministry”

Call to ministry is linked with the call to salvation, all believers are gifted to serve.

Some believers are equipped with preaching and pastoral gifts and should seriously consider whether they should make church ministry their “career.”

Call to Ministry is linked to our commitment to the Church, Acts 20.28, 1 Peter 5.2

Church leaders should encourage and help develop young leaders.

Purpose of ministry gifts is to build up and expand the Church.

Theological Education should serve and support the Church.

Ordination and appointment to ministry is the responsibility of local churches.

Local churches are part of the global Church, and sometimes perspective and balance are seen more clearly from the wider church perspective.

Questions to Consider from 1 Timothy 3

Do you have a godly ambition to serve in ministry?

- Working where there is need, not just where he can express his gifts.
- Working to make those above him a success, not to develop his success
- Is just as happy to use service to address his weakness as to hone his strengths
- Seeks to make the work of those around him a joy
- Uses his influence to promote the church’s good, not just his own advancement
- Works with excellence, diligence, and faithfulness for the attention of Christ, not others
- Walks boldly on the path of sacrifice and treads cautiously on the path of promotion
- Joyfully steps back in order to let another man step forward

Does your home life look like a healthy and thriving “mini-church?”

- If you want to be a pastor, you and your spouse must be prepared to live in a “fish bowl”

- There are many wonderful “aunties” and “uncles” for your kids, and some nasty ones too!
- Your kids will be labeled “PK’s” and that has good and bad results.

Can You Preach?

- Gospel – does your preaching move people toward the gospel?
- Bible – do you have an aptitude for doctrine? Do you exegete Scripture competently?
- Eagerness – are people glad that you are going to preach?
- People – do your messages help people? Do people feel that you relate to them?
- Cohesive – are your messages clear and easy to follow?
- Guest – do visitors come back? Is the gospel clear to them?

Are you a Shepherd?

- Your “preaching menu” is Biblically balanced, leading the church to grow in knowledge, understanding, and holiness
- People are impacted by your life and example. Gifted people want to “hang out” with you.
- When you see a need you gather ideas / solutions and put a plan into action.
- You can see the “big picture” of ministry – all people, needs, opportunities – for a sustained period. Others “catch” your vision and buy in.
- You work toward organization and effectiveness in your life and ministry.
- You put people into positions of ministry, trusting them and encouraging them
- You are an example of study and growing in your life and ministry
- You do not run from challenges, doing all you can to advance the Gospel.

Do you Love the Lost?

“Do the work of an evangelist” 2 Timothy 4.5

- Go with your story
- Look for opportunities
- Build Relationships

Who sees “The Pastor” in you?

...the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit...

Acts 13.2-4

MISSIONARY THRUST is THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

COMMISSIONING AGENT? - BOTH Holy Spirit and the Church

v. 3 "they sent them off" / v. 4 "sent on their way by the Holy Spirit"

BALANCE - Spirit sent them, by telling Church to do so

Church sent them, because told to do so by Spirit

BALANCE IS HEALTHY CORRECTIVE TO TWO OPPOSITE EXTREMES

INDIVIDUALISM - Christian "lead by God" with no affirmation of Church

INSTITUTIONALISM - all decisions made by Church without Holy Spirit

BALANCED MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Inward Call to the Worker Outward Confirmation by Church

Commissioning by the Church Sending by Holy Spirit

What can you do while you're Waiting?

1. Be honest about your desires. Is it really what you want? Parents? Friends? Church?

Practical Step: Write a letter to your Pastor and share what you think is your call.

2. Pray. Practical Step: Schedule regular times of prayer for God's guidance.

3. Start serving. Calling is revealed in serving.

Practical step: Ask your church leaders, "where can I plug in and serve our church?"

4. Pursue a vocational direction. Not every pastor always makes money from church work.

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, 3 and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. Acts 18.1-5

5. Seek counsel and evaluation of your life and ministry? Take some "gifts" tests.

Practical Step – Have a regular accountability / check-in time with a ministry leader.

6. Study. Regular preaching means you keep reading and studying theology for life!

Practical Step – Ask your pastor for a reading list. (If you borrow his books, return them!)

7. Mature. Measure your life against the qualifications for leaders in the Scriptures.

Practical Step – Seek accountability and correction from those closest to you...your wife?

8. Get your house in order. Be light and nimble, ready to pivot and launch!

Practical Step – Get out of debt!

9. Wait on the Lord. The ministry is His, and He knows when/if you are ready.

Practical Step – pursue other employable skills for survival and opportunities.

- Do I recognize the hand of God, the Caller, in placing the burden of calling in my life?
- Do I trust that where I am in life today – even if it's not where I want to be – can never limit God's ability to accomplish His will in my life?
- Am I responding to my present situation with faith?
- Would others say I am a grateful man?
- Do I trust God both to clarify my call and confirm his direction?
- Am I content with the process God has me in?
- Am I watching my life and my doctrine carefully (1 Timothy 4.16)?
- Am I investing in my own sanctification and the development of my doctrine?
- Would others say that I am using this season of my life to maximum benefit?

Thoughts started by: Am I Called? The Summons to Pastoral Ministry by Dave Harvey

Other Good Reads:

Lectures to My Students by Charles Spurgeon

Called to the Ministry by Edmund Clowney

The Cross and Christian Ministry by D.A. Carson

Brothers, We are Not Professionals by John Piper