

**Demystifying
Ministers,
Ministries
And
Ministering**

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There has been quite a bit of confusion over the definition of the term “minister” as used in the New Testament. Most Christians would think that a minister is a pastor who preaches the gospel and ministers to the flock in the church. Moreover, Christians often hear the pastor declare during weddings that he is a minister of the gospel of Christ and this authorizes him to pronounce the man and the bride husband and wife. But is this what is taught in the New Testament? What actually is the biblical definition of a minister? Who are ministers in the New Testament? How can a Christian become a minister? Are there women ministers? What are ministries? What is ministering? How can a minister minister biblically? This book based on a sermon preached is to address some of these questions in hope that Christians will realize that a minister is nothing more a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. His chief end in the ministry is to glorify the Lord and nothing else. So here is this book demystifying the ministers, his ministries and ministering.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10&11)

The purpose of this book is to address the misconception of the term “minister” as generally used in Christendom. The word “minister” as used by many Christians tends to imply an office holder of the church. In particular a minister is often referred to the pastor of a church. Though a minister could mean a person called a pastor, it does not mean a minister is a title just meant for a pastor. Moreover, nowhere in the New Testament you will find a pastor is called a minister who has the authority to ordain elders and deacons as though this man is the overall in charge of all the office holders of the church. If a pastor is a minister while others are not, then who ordain the pastor to become a minister in the first place?

The word “minister” could be a noun or a verb. A minister refers to a person. A minister in the simplest sense of the word simply means a servant and to minister is to serve. So in contrast to the way the people in the world are using this word, a minister is a servant and not someone important like a politician where he is being served by many. It is not so easy to approach a minister of the state if you ever need help from him. You have to go through proper channels via grassroots leaders in your constituency even before you could approach your own Member of Parliament. Your Member of Parliament will then try to write to the minister in charged to address your problem or grievances.

But a minister in the New Testament is simply a person who serves the people as a servant having received the gift from God. A minister in the New Testament is never elected by the people to serve the people. A minister in the New Testament is firstly given gifts from above and given a task to perform as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. As these ministers serve the people, they are ministering for the Lord. A minister in the New Testament is never meant for someone having power and authority to lord over others. The Lord gives the clearest definition of the word “minister” in the gospel. **But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so**

shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42-45)

So we note how the world use the term “minister” in a very different sense where ministers are important people in which the common man can hardly approach to get their problems addressed. A New Testament minister is defined as a servant in verse 44. Moreover, the chief minister turns out to be the chief servant of all. Having laid the foundation on what the word “minister” means, a few questions would be in order to get a fuller picture of how the word “minister” is used in the New Testament.

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: (Romans 15:8) So the Lord Jesus Christ is a minister to the Jews. The Lord came to minister and not to be ministered unto and gave His life a ransom for many. The Lord being a minister and came to minister, meaning to serve the people, what do we expect His ministers do? Of course to be like Christ and serve the people as well. It is indeed a service vocation to be a minister. Then who ordained the Lord? It is definitely not men but God.

Paul claimed to be a minister in the New Testament. **That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:16)**

Paul was a minister of Christ to the Gentiles. Who ordained Paul to be a minister? Surely not men but God. He mentioned he was made a minister by the Lord when testifying of his salvation experience and calling before the court of Festus and King Agrippa. The Lord comforted Paul and told him: **But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:16-18)**

So Paul was made a minister by God and not by men. He continued to write about being made a minister to Christians in Colosse. **If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; (Colossians 1:23-25)** Paul was made a minister according to the dispensation of God and not by the election of men.

Paul again confirmed that he and others were made a minister by God and not by man when he wrote to the Christians in Corinth. **And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)**

Paul also claimed that he was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God in Ephesians 3:7: **Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.** So no one was elected to become a minister of Christ. No one became a minister because someone laid hands on him. A man is a minister of the Lord because of the gift of God given to him. He has a mission to fulfill based on the gifts given to him from above. He has been loaded and armed with spiritual gifts to carry out a spiritual warfare as a minister of the Lord. There are objectives to be accomplished and crowns to be won.

Besides Paul, there are several other bible characters mentioned as minister as well. **Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? (1 Corinthians 3:5)** Apollos was a minister though he was not an apostle. There is no record to suggest that Apollos was an elder of a church to begin with. Obviously no men appointed him or elected him to be a minister. He was just an eloquent man mighty in Scriptures mentioned in Acts 18:24: **And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.** So his gift was the gift of the gap and he ministered effectually with this gift to the Body of Christ.

Tychicus was another minister mentioned in Ephesians 6:21: **But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:** This man was a faithful minister. He must have used the gifts he received from above to minister for the Lord effectively. Paul commended this man again when he wrote to believers in Colosse. **All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: (Colossians 4:7)** So Tychicus was a minister and also a fellow servant with Paul. Hence a minister and a servant go together. No one can become a minister without becoming a servant. A

minister who is not a servant is a strange mutation. **The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. (Matthew 10:24)**

Epaphras was another minister also known as a fellow servant as well. **As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; (Colossians 1:7)** This man was also another faithful minister like Tychicus. Heaven must be rejoicing as the gifts bestowed from above to this man were not in vain. Epaphras was also named as a fellow prisoner with Paul in Philemon 1:23: **There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;** So a minister is not someone with earthly power but a servant and sometimes even to the extent of becoming a prisoner for the Lord. How unglamorous it is in the eye of the world to be a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Timothy the preacher was a minister as well mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 3:2: **And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:** Timothy was a minister who laboured with Paul and as such Paul called him a fellow labourer. Timothy was labouring with Paul on the gospel work as Paul also commanded him: **But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)** This man was an evangelist and he was certainly a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides the church of the living God, the secular powers that be are also known as ministers of God. **Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (Romans 13:1-6)**

So surely you will not mistake ministers as pastors for the secular power is definitely not pastoral in nature. They serve a very different function in society to execute judgment on evildoers so that there will be social order in a given land. In fact Christians are commanded to pray for these ministers so that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life. **I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (1 Timothy 2:1&2)** Unfortunately, these ministers often abused their power from above. Instead of being servants, they become lords and oppress the people. As such, there is an urgent need to pray for those in authority so that peace and judgment may prevail for the benefits of Christians doing the Lord's work.

Of course when you have something that is true, you have to expect the fake to show up in Scriptures as well. **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)** So when you have ministers of God, you have ministers of Satan as well. Hence, Christians must be discerning to know who are ministers of God and who are ministers of Satan. The consequence of being complacent is unthinkable. These false ministers of Satan are out to cause trouble for Christians and Christians should do well mark them and avoid them.

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. (Romans 16:1-4)

As we learn that a minister is a servant, we find a sister here by the name Phebe who is also a servant of the church. Priscilla together with Aquila were mentioned to have laid down their lives as helpers in Christ with Paul. These women Phebe and Priscilla were highly commended by the apostle Paul. Though these women were not called ministers, they no doubt performed the work of ministering to saints as well. As such, it is not wrong to regard these godly women as ministers for ministers are servants indeed. Ministering has no restriction place on the individuals whether the person is a man or a woman. Moreover, there is no age barrier in ministering. Any Christian having received the gift from above is in a position to minister. Hence, women can be ministers as well. This does not mean women can be elders and deacons of churches.

After the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ back to heaven, the apostles immediately discussed about the Lord's ministry. They went about to determine who should be involved and included into this ministry to replace the traitor Judas Iscariot. **For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. (Acts 1:17&25)**

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the minister of the Jews, these disciples continued with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ ministering to the Jews after the Lord's ascension to heaven. Getting involved in the Lord's work is a ministry. This ministry includes taking care of the needs of the people and teaching and admonishing them in the Lord. It also concerns reaching the lost by the foolishness of preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. One very important aspect of the ministry is the ministry of the word of God. **But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:4)** The importance of this ministry cannot be underemphasized. This aspect of the ministry is to provide spiritual food and nourishment to the believers in Christ. As such, these ministers are to spend time to study the word of God and spend much time on their knees in prayers so that the people of God are fed. If this ministry is neglected, the people will become spiritually malnourish and sick. Hence, the Lord gives gifts to certain men to be ministers in this area to feed the flock of God. Because different Christians are given different gifts, they have their proper place in the Body of Christ to minister to one another whether waiting on tables or ministering the word of life.

Ministering for the Lord may require some traveling like the disciples and apostles of the Lord. **And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark. (Acts 12:25)** This ministry is to reach the lost for Christ and exhort believers everywhere. Such ministry is in fact evangelistic in nature and the cost can be very high as testified by the apostle Paul. **But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20:24)** Paul was willing to lay down his life for this ministry of the Lord. A good minister must be willing to give his life to the Lord so that he can minister effectively. Only then can he minister in a way to finish his course with joy. Such a ministry is given by the Lord and not from men.

This ministry is to accomplish certain objectives for the Lord. **And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. (Acts 21:19)**

The Lord does raise up other helpers to minister to those in the frontline doing the Lord's battle. One family is named by Paul who had been faithful in this area of the ministry. **I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such. (1 Corinthians 16:15-18)** This man's household was not only faithful; they were addicts of such ministry as well. They had been providing the spiritual and material support to Paul who was in the frontline opening up doors for the gospel to reach the lost. These men are ministers in their own right in ministering to the saints. Those who received ministry from the Lord must be faithful and consistent in their work of faith and labour of love. **Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; (2 Corinthians 4:1)** These ministers must not allow themselves to become weary in well doing. For the ministry is a long-term work and ministers must endure hardness as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is primarily to reach the lost for Christ. It is also called the ministry of reconciliation **And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)** As far as this ministry of reconciliation is concerned, every child of God is a minister in his own right. A child of God has to bear witness of what has happened to him and how the Lord has mercy on him to save him. So he is a minister trying to reconcile the lost with the Lord and as such, he is also called an ambassador for Christ as he is sent by the Lord to tell the lost world the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because the ministry of the Lord is of such importance, every minister must be careful how he

conducts himself as ambassador for Christ. **Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: (2 Corinthians 6:3)**

Since there is an enormous amount of work for the Lord in ministering to the lost and saved alike, the Lord gives gifts to different man to equip them to do a work for Him. **But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (Ephesians 4:7-12)** So all these men whether they are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers, they are gifts from God to the Body of Christ. They are given to the Body of Christ for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and to edify Christians wherever they are.

A minister who has received a ministry from the Lord is supposed to fulfill his ministry. **And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. (Colossians 4:17)** There is no retirement in any given ministry because of the gifts given to the minister to minister for the Lord. Quitting is not an option in the ministry. A minister may labour till he is called home to be with the Lord but he cannot give up ministering till his work is done. This is because the Lord only gives ministries to faithful men whom the Lord could count on to fulfill such ministries. **And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (1 Timothy 1:12)** Timothy was told to make full proof of his ministry as he had to give an account to the Lord one day. **But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)**

Fulfilling the Lord's ministry is a long-term, long drawn work. From time to time, a minister may fall short of his work due to whatever reasons and circumstances that beset him for a time. However, since he has received the gift from above, the Lord will not allow him to stop ministering. One such example is Mark who left the ministry of Paul and Barnabas for a while. In the end, he was highly valued by Paul who commended him to

Timothy. **Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. (2 Timothy 4:11)** As such, no man should ever quit in ministering for the Lord because of the gifts he has received from above. Much is at stake in this spiritual warfare.

Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6:3-10)

So here we have these marks of the true ministers of God. Ministering is definitely not a tea party. It is surely not a series of meetings and discussion in a boardroom full of empty talks with no action. A minister must dirty his hand in the work of ministering to others. A minister of God must be willing to go through a lot of tribulations and sufferings. He must be willing to be maligned and misunderstood by others. A minister must be willing to become poor while making many rich. He must be willing to do all giving none offence so that the ministry not be blamed.

Hence, a minister is not an office title or someone holding high position and prestige within a church. A minister is a servant for Christ who must be willing to suffer for His name's sake. Paul no doubt had suffered a lot for Christ and he even had to defend himself as a minister of Christ by pointing out to others the sufferings he had to bear.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in

watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

Therefore, ministering is a very lowly and sacrificial work. It is not something glamorous that attract the praises of men but God. It requires a minister to be selfless to live for Christ and others. A minister is no doubt a servant for all. The kind of sufferings and affliction a minister has to endure is beyond the comprehension of the fallen mind. The objective for ministering is to glorify Christ. The primary motivation is because of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory is also a servant as well for He came to minister during His earthly minister leaving a legacy for His disciples to follow His footsteps. Truly a disciple is not above his Master! If the Lord Jesus Christ is the Master of the child of God, a Christian must be a servant as well; otherwise, he is above his own Master and Lord.

Paul claimed that he earned his own keeps during his own earthly ministry. **Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. (Acts 20:34)** The apostle Paul certainly was not a freeloader. He worked with his own hands to provide for his own needs as well as the needs of others. He was not a high paying churchman who could travel first class giving motivational talks and seminars to tickle the minds of professing Christians of our Laodicean church age. The ministry is not for the purpose of making a living, especially a career that enriches the minister. There are so many ministries in Christendom that resemble nothing of the characters of the ministries in the New Testament but are purely industries to make merchandise of unsuspecting Christians. The minister is a servant who gives his all in the service of others.

So those who always believe that if you live right you will become very rich in material things, think again. Paul laboured much but he was often found to be very poor and having to eat free meals from prison. He was found to be fasting often as well as to suffer hunger. Of course, there were Christians ministering to Paul while he was in prison as well. During such time of imprisonment, Paul did receive help from other Christians who ministered to him as revealed from Scriptures. **And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. (Acts 24:23)**

As such, ministering is simply serving in a way that we may be able to meet the needs of others. Ministering does not always mean preaching the gospel of Christ. The acquaintance of Paul who ministered to him certainly was not preaching the gospel to Paul but meeting his needs. To minister means to serve, to take care, to meet someone's needs and sometimes even to meet the wants as well. Ministering has got nothing to do with power and prestige. Ministering in fact is a very lowly work that requires a great deal of patience and humility. Ministering is not ordering others to run hither and thither while we sip tea at home and wait for reports to come in from those who bid our running. Paul gave a breakdown of how Christians can minister in their own capacity according to the gifts they received from the Lord.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of

faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:3-8)

So firstly, high-minded people cannot be good ministers of God. Only sober Christians understand what ministering for the Lord is all about. It is precisely because Christians all belong to the same Body of Christ, and as such, there is a need to minister to one another so that this Body can grow and function properly and effectively. We do not want the world to look at us as a dysfunctional group of people always having strives among ourselves, and so who would want to join us?

Because we are all different members in the same body, therefore we all have different gifts. These gifts from above are not meant for us to flaunt and to exalt ourselves as well as to please ourselves. They are given to us so that we can use them to minister to others. Ministering includes preaching or ministration of the word of God, or teaching or giving, exhortation, and showing mercy and all such works are to be carried out with simplicity.

The professing church makes the ministries to become so complicated when they bring the world into the church. You will find them giving Christians fanciful titles so that they are in a position to minister. You have titles like Sunday School Superintendent, Music Director, Youth Pastor, Chief Usher, Flower Arranger, and even Janitors can be found listed on church bulletins. Humble and sincere Christians definitely have no need of special titles to puff up their egos in order to minister for the Lord. Ministers are just servants and not people with special status within an organization that comes with all the perks and privileges.

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily;

and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. (Romans 15:25-27)

Meeting the needs of poor saints is one aspect of ministering to one another for the Lord. During those days, it is indeed quite cumbersome to travel over long distances to minister to saints in the matter of giving and providing to the necessities of the poor saints. In our day and age, we could wire monies over to those saints in need and help them out from time to time in times of dire need.

So ministering and being a good minister require a person to be hospitable and charitable which is listed as one of those requirements for the office of an elder. Elders have to set the example so that other Christians will learn from them and follow their examples of selflessness always remembering other Christians in need being in the same Body of Christ. Paul even gave examples of such ministering of the believers in Macedonia and Corinth.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)

The poor brethren in Macedonia were willing to participate in the fellowship of ministering to the saints in need. Though they were materially poor, yet they wanted to be part of this ministry to minister to the saints. They were no doubt rich in faith trusting in the Lord to recompense them for their work of faith. Paul wrote on this matter again in the following chapter to the Christians in Corinth.

For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace

abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) (2 Corinthians 9:1-10)

Ministering could be so simple and no one can claim that he cannot be a minister of Christ in this respect unless he has nothing left to give. This should debunk the myth that a minister is only meant for a pastor preaching the gospel. Ministering to the saints is indeed part of the ministry of the Lord as we take care of one another being the same Body of Christ.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:1&2) A minister of Christ is a faithful man. The Lord has given us mysteries with regards to revelation from the Holy Bible. Ministers of Christ are stewards of such mysteries and they are to learn them and teach them diligently so that all may grow together in the Lord. As such, a good minister must be found to be faithful in discharging his duty as the Lord reveals spiritual truths to him. So ministering is more than just giving and meeting the needs of the saints. Another aspect of ministering is to edify the saints.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29) So besides ministering by giving and meeting the needs of others, a minister has to learn how to control his tongue. It is not that we cannot joke and have some light moments, we must be careful not to give offence by means of corrupt communication. A minister is supposed to use his tongue to minister to others and not to use his tongue to cause trouble. Corrupt communication certainly is the exact opposite of ministering to the saints. Corrupt communication could come in the form of ministering questions that is to cast doubt on biblical truth and weaken the faith of believers as warned by the apostle Paul. **Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. (1 Timothy 1:4)**

Hence, edifying others is a ministry as well. So everyone can be a minister too if he uses his tongue to edify the saints instead of corrupting

others through corrupt communication. Every child of God definitely has something to say and share with others with regards to what great things the Lord has done for him. He can surely minister in this simple way to edify the saints. If a Christian cannot even give a proper testimony of his salvation, his faith in Christ is strange fire indeed. If he cannot even tell others what has happened to him in the most holy faith, how can he ever be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ? Therefore, edifying the saints is a ministry open to all whether the child of God is a man or a woman. There is no age barrier in this ministry either.

If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. (1 Timothy 4:6) Here is another way to minister to the saints for the Lord as a good minister. So what are the things that Timothy was supposed to put the brethren in remembrance? The message a good minister is required to remind the saints is given in 1 Timothy 4:1-5: **Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**

A good minister of Christ is someone who warns the brethren about the perilous times of the last days. This constant reminder will keep the saints vigilant so that they might not become victims of the seducing spirits of the last days. Thus, a good minister must be vigilant himself and he must be discerning as such spirits are not called seducing spirits for no reason. These wicked spirits are out to entice and ensnare the saints and many have fallen prey to them. A good minister is to neutralize such threats to the Body of Christ by means of putting the brethren in remembrance of the danger they face.

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well. (2 Timothy 1:16-18)

The house of Onesiphorus ministered many things to Paul while Paul was in prison. No doubt it is not easy to minister to Paul while he was in prison. The amount of time spent visiting Paul in prison and taking instruction from him to run errand and take care of other ministries was definitely not a matter of a few days or weeks. It was quite a long-term commitment kind of a ministry attending to Paul in prison. It required a lot of legwork and hard work and hence, a minister must not be lazy in the ministry.

His reward for such kind of ministering is mercy from the Lord. How often we need mercy from the Lord? I surely do not mind such kinds of rewards. In fact, I value this kind of rewards highly. So ministering to others in need will chalk up mercy to your account where you might need it someday. Do not we all need mercy from the Lord? The Lord is rich in mercy and there will be more than enough tender mercies for the saints who are willing to serve others and meet their needs especially those who become a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we want to obtain mercy from the Lord to mitigate whatever trouble we might have to deal with in the future, then we have to start ministering to the saints in need. This is the law of the Golden Rule by doing unto others as we would that others do unto us.

The Lord indeed promised to reward those who minister to others in His name: **For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Hebrews 6:10)** God is not forgetful and do not take note of Christians ministering to the saints. Work of faith and labour of love are part of ministering for the Lord to the saints. So we should be careful to maintain good works as exhorted by Scriptures. All these good works will not go unnoticed by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord surely remembers what we do for Him to His people.

In fact the Lord gave His disciples a promise that a reward will be given out to those who simply offer others a drink. **And whosoever shall**

give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. (Matthew 10:42) Ministering is so simple and you certainly do not need fanciful titles to minister for the Lord. A reward is promised by none other than our Lord. All we need to do is just to offer a cup of cold water to someone in the name of a disciple of Christ. Your reward is guaranteed. You do not need to read a book “Ministering for Dummies” in order to know how to minister for the Lord. All that is required is that we exercise the gifts that we receive from God.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10&11)

Every Christian is a minister of God in his own right because every man has received the gift. You do not have to sit for some tests to determine whether you are gifted or not. Every child of God is gifted in some way. He has received gifts from above and he can use these gifts to minister to others. He is not given these gifts to be kept and stored away. In fact he is supposed to be good stewards of these gifts by ministering one to another. None of us here have the excuse to claim that we are not ministers for Christ.

You surely do not need to be elected by men to become a minister. You do not need fanciful titles to be given to you to enable you to minister for the Lord. If a man speaks, he should speak as the oracles of God. He does not need to be an eloquent orator like Apollos. He simply has to preach in the fear of God not in the fear of men. He should minister according to the ability God gives to him. The purpose of ministering is to build up the Body of Christ and glorify God.

All of you are ministers of Christ as well. Maybe you have been ministering for Christ all along and you are not aware of it. You have your own portfolio in this ministry. If you have been ministering grace to the hearers by abstaining from corrupt communication, you are a minister of grace. If you have been providing to the necessities of the saints, you are a minister of mercy. If you have been suffering for righteousness sake and for the Lord, you are no doubt a minister of the gospel of Christ. Ministers of

the Lord have to be good stewards and minister faithfully. So brethren, let us use our gifts from above to minister to the lost and to one another in the Lord. The promise of rewards is sure and one day, we will not regret having used the gifts that we receive to minister one to another for the Lord.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11) Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; (2 Corinthians 4:1) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9)

If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kiv-asia.com.