

Pastor's Corner – 10-14-2017  
Personal Calling and Corporate Mission

Have you ever had a super great ministry idea that you were really excited about? Perhaps you noticed a significant need in the church or the community and said to yourself, "Self, we really should do something about that! "

Chances are, if you have had such feelings, that you brought the ideas to a pastor or to an elder or maybe even to the church board. There's also a pretty good chance that you were discouraged by the lack of response and enthusiasm from the pastor or the elder or the church board.

This kind of situation has been one of the most frequent areas of member frustration that I have seen in my years of ministry. It happens whenever someone feels passion about some kind of ministry but they can't seem to get the church to move in the same direction that they feel God is moving them. And once you feel like your ideas keep getting shot down it's natural to get a little bit salty and gripe about how the church never wants to do anything.

I think the real issue is not that the church doesn't want to do things, it's just that we sometimes confuse our personal calling with the church's corporate mission. Allow me to explain.

Each one of us is called by God to be a minister, a priest, and a bearer of the good news. These are responsibilities given to us as individuals. That means that you have a personal calling from God to be one of his representatives in the world. You are uniquely gifted with unique talents and unique experiences. There is nobody else that is just like you that shares your same passions the same way that you do. God wants to use you, with your individual gifts and interests, to make a difference in this world.

Sometimes we start to get a glimpse of our personal calling when a ministry idea comes to us that we are convinced is the most awesome evangelistic plan since Joshua Himes mass produced William Miller's thoughts on the immanent advent. This is good. Our mistake is when we try to convince the church that our personal calling is also the church's corporate mission.

For example, let's say you have been impressed to start an underwater basket weaving ministry. You know there is a tremendous need for such a ministry, because who doesn't like underwater basket weaving? You can think of a dozen people who would immediately join such a group and you know it would give you a chance to talk about spiritual things, maybe even start up some Bible studies. Naturally you want the church to endorse (and organize, and fund) your underwater basket weaving ministry. So you share your idea with the Community Services leader and with the pastor. You ask to present it at the board. You try to sell the church on your personal calling to start up underwater basket weaving. But the corporate mission of the church doesn't include underwater basket weaving and so you walk away frustrated because you have this God given passion that is going unmet.

But why? Why do we try to convince the church to do something that God has called us, as individuals, do to?

I have a suggestion for the next time you are impressed with a ministry idea. Instead of trying to pass it off to a voted ministry leader, the pastor, or the board, why not see if there are two or three other families that share your passion? Then see if they want to do something about it. Then go and do it.

You don't need the church's permission to answer God's call and to follow through with a ministry idea that he has impressed you to pursue.

This kind of ministry free-for-all can be a bit scary for church leadership types (i.e. pastors and church boards) because it means we lose some control. It means that people might go off and do something embarrassing. But I am convinced that the priesthood of all believers is a real thing. I'm convinced that Christ is the only true head of the church and that if he wants to send someone to start

an underwater basket weaving ministry, who am I to say that they can't do it? I'm also convinced that church structure exists to organize, rather than control, mission.

How great an impact could we make if each one of us discovered our personal calling and then, instead of waiting for the church to get behind us, we just did it?

The church definitely has a role to play here but I believe it is in the area of support, encouragement, and coordination. The board may not share your vision for underwater basket weaving but we sure can support you as you pursue it. But it's up to you. God has given you the vision and the passion. Your personal calling rises and falls on your efforts.

So take some time to consider God's personal calling for your life. Then, get to work.

Happy Sabbath  
Pastor Tyler

Agree? Disagree? Check out the Pastor's Corner on our Facebook page and join the discussion!