



School Of Ministry

Lesson 31

CHURCH PIONEERING, Planting, & Leading

(1) The Church: Preambles and Overview.

In order for us to understand the true importance of the Church, we have to understand the meaning and usage of the word. “Church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia”. This word in its simplest definition means ‘the called out ones’. In the secular Greek society, the word was used commonly and it referred to an assembly of free citizens who were called out from their homes and / or places of business to assemble together to give consideration to matters of public interest (see Acts 19:32, 29, 41). The church existed in the Old Testament (Acts 7:38), and the word is used over a hundred times in the New Testament to refer to the “Called out ones” of Jesus Christ. He introduced this usage when He referred to “His Church” (Matthew 16:18) to depict His own people who have been called out and separated from the world; free citizens of the heavenly community summoned by the trumpet of the gospel to assemble themselves together for worship, fellowship, and mission fulfillment (Phil 3:15; I Cor 1:25-26; 2 Pet 1:10).

a. Not a Building or House of Worship... not a Sect, Denomination or Organization...

It is important to understand that the word “Church” is never used to refer to a building or house of worship. The church meets in a house or building but is not a material building itself (Rom 16:5). The people of God are a spiritual house built together for God’s habitation (Eph 2:20-22). It is also important to note that the word “Church” is never used in scripture to refer to a sect, denomination or organization. Sometimes people in our day use this word to indicate some form of ecclesiastical system, but that is foreign to the New Testament. The church belongs to Jesus Christ, and He is the central authority to whom all New Testament churches must relate.

b. The Nature and Expressions of the CHURCH...

In Matthew 16:15-19, Jesus referred to the universal nature of the church. The universal church is that spiritual body of believers from all generations both living and dead who have separated themselves unto God and have aligned themselves with his purpose. In the

only other passage in which Jesus discussed the church (Matthew 18:15-20), He referred to the local or visible expression of the church. The local church can be defined as that local expression of believers who gather together regularly involving specific group of people in given localities that are marked out by confession of faith, discipline of life, obedience in baptism, having gifted ministries and keeping the memorial of the Lord. The local church can be in small cells or large celebration gatherings. Local churches are birthed through specific visions given by God through the Holy Spirit to His apostolic ministers (see Acts and Revelation churches).

c. The CHURCH fulfills the HEART and PURPOSE of the FATHER...

The Word of God (Ephesians 3:1-5) shows God had a hidden purpose from the beginning of times (Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:8-14). This purpose is now revealed and is being fulfilled by the church. God's desire is for the reproduction of His self image and likeness, for multiplicity and fruitfulness, for reproduction of ministry and partnership, for communion and relationship, and to provide a Bride for His Son. Thus, the church is to be self-propagating, as well as being self-supporting and self-governing. The church propagates by (1) Reaching individual souls through aggressive evangelism in its local community; (2) Raising up and equipping leaders to carry responsibility and vision; (3) Extending the kingdom of God in their nation by planting other reproducing local churches; and (4) By touching the nations of the world directly through their ministries and indirectly by partnering with other ministries and local churches around the world.

(2) PIONEERING, PLANTING, & LEADING...(Psalms 127; I Corinthians 3)

The most vital question that potential pioneering ministers need to settle within their own heart is whether or not they have truly received the call of God to pioneer or plant or lead a local, cell, "internet", or other church. Pioneering a church is perhaps the most spiritually exacting and physically exhausting of any ministerial pursuits. It requires maturity, experience, and spiritual stability.

a. Job Description for Pioneers (of Local churches).... (2Corinthians 3 &4)

In addition to maintaining the personal character traits of I Timothy 3, the pioneering pastor must of necessity be a multifaceted and self-motivated leader. He /she must possess administrative abilities and be willing to take on the responsibilities of a corporate executive. He is required to be meticulous, always "available", have public relation skills, and work at more than one job sometimes to make ends meet. In addition to ensuring personal spiritual growth and development by committing to the ministry of Prayer and the Word, a pioneering minister's job include vision casting, planning and executing meetings and special events, locating and communicating God's plan and direction for the future of the church, responding to emergencies, negotiating contracts with vendors, overseeing and managing the business life of the church, mobilizing finances for regular operations and special projects, making tough decisions, developing leaders etc. In addition, he /she is expected to keep an impeccable family life, minister a fresh message weekly, and love everybody including many who may by naturally "un-

loveable” . Apostle Paul was right when he wrote about the insufficiency that every minister has in themselves. It is only by employing God’s grace, strength, and wisdom, that the challenges of pioneering can be overcome (Philippians 4:13).

b. Prepare Before Pioneering....(Luke 14:25-33)

Whether planning to pioneer a full-fledged local church, or a smaller cell church, preparation and training are of utmost importance. Apprenticeship is required to produce careful preparation, accurate training, and well seasoned maturity. It is important that a minister take the time to learn as much as possible through being disciplined, mentored, and tutored before stepping into a pioneering role. Be wise: Sit under a tutor and learn in humility (Matthew 10:16-25; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:5). Don’t make assumptions and don’t be in a hurry. However, don’t be timid; be bold. Walk alongside somebody and help them pioneer. That is your “seed-time” and the rewards of your faithfulness will produce a great harvest in your future.

c. Receiving, Discipling, and Releasing New Pioneers....(2 Timothy 2:1-26)

It is God’s plan that disciples are enlisted and trained to be pioneers of “new” churches. That is how to take the gospel all around the world. There are 3 phases to every “church” plant whether cells or local churches: (1) Foundation; (2) Establishment; and (3) Consolidation. When you step into pioneering either in a leading or supporting role, commit to the long haul. Make evangelism a strong focus; enlist disciples by being an example of faithfulness and boldly challenging people to commit to the “work”. Make discipleship a priority. Make room for the Holy Spirit to work, and be strong in faith. As your disciples are trained and begin to fulfill set criteria of commitment and faithfulness, engage them more, challenging the potential within them to do greater works in the kingdom of God. When God calls them, and you know they are ready, release them to go out and enlist more disciples, thereby replicating what you are doing. That is God’s eternal plan for the multiplication of His CHURCH.