



★ joining a ministry team

the MINISTRY PAPERS

getting it wrong...

John arrived at church a couple of months ago. He made it clear when he first arrived that he has a real gift in the area of kids talks. He's been frustrated in previous churches that haven't allowed him to properly use his gift. He loves doing kids talks and suggests he should be involved in the kids talks program as soon as possible. In fact, John isn't really open to other forms of serving in the church. Stacking chairs was definitely not his gift. Or cleaning toilets. Kids talks is his particular gift. And if it's his gift, he should use it, right? John was especially reluctant about the need to go along to the newcomers group that was starting at church. He was beginning to think maybe there's another church that will better appreciate his gift. He was very frustrated with the leadership of the church in not recognizing what he had to offer.

What's the problem here? How could leadership have worked with John to help him take a better approach to serving in the church?



Melinda has been around at church for over two years now. She's a very quiet kind of person. She's happy enough at church and has got to know a few people. She's been involved in a small group for most of the two years, but somehow she doesn't feel as involved in the church as she would like. But she hasn't wanted to look pushy and isn't really sure how she could serve more anyway. Ask the leadership of the church how long Melinda has been around, even her own small group leader and they'd be surprised to learn it's been two years already.

What's the problem here? How could leadership have worked with Melinda to help her get more involved serving in the church?

LEADERS:...before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: **'the ministry training church'** and **'meeting one to one'**.

Our church has two main 'arms': small groups & ministry teams. This 'joining a ministry team' paper relates to the **ministry teams** arm. It's designed to help your small group leader introduce you to our ministry teams. It also offers a process for thinking through which ministry team you might join.



investigate

read 1 Timothy 4:12-16

1. What is Timothy to do for other believers (verse 12)?

2. What is Timothy's particular gift (verse 13)?

3. Who identified this gift? Was it Timothy himself (verse 14)?

4. Does giftedness mean no work or training is needed on our part? Why/why not (verse 15)

5. What two things must Timothy watch closely? Why are each of these so important?



think & apply

6. What does this passage tell us about the role of church leadership in promoting/commissioning the gifts of believers?

7. What encouragements and challenges does the passage present to you as you think about serving in a ministry team?

8. What issues other than 'giftedness' does the passage raise in relation to serving others in ministry?

start with **Christ...**

When we come to think about ministry and particular ways we might serve our church family, where do we start? It's a common mistake to start with the issue of gifts. It's easy to start with looking *inwards*: "what's my gift?". Far better, however is to start by looking *outwards*. And as we look outwards, the first place we should look is to Christ. We should start with Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. The issue of giftedness was certainly raised in our opening passage from 1 Timothy. It is important and we will come back to it. But the best place to start is with learning the attitude of Jesus...



read **Philippians 2:1-11**

investigate

1. What attitudes are we called to avoid (verse 3)?

2. What attitudes are we to adopt instead (verses 1-2, 4)?

3. How can we best learn this attitude (verses 5-11)?



think & apply

4. What do we learn here about Christian ministry?

5. What personally challenges you?

small groups & ministry teams

The table below shows a number of key goals that our small groups are aiming for as we seek to encourage each other. It's all about relationships. The small group is a context in which we can be accountable for all the important relationships in our lives.

The last goal in the table relates to growing relationships with the **whole church** in mission, serving in a ministry team. That's what this paper is all about: helping your small group leader encourage you to step forward in our mission together. We saw in the 1 Timothy passage that it's the role of leaders to help you, under God, to identify your gifts. It's the role of leaders to encourage you to use your gifts. But before we even talk about gifts, it's the role of leaders to help you think about your life and doctrine—your whole life in service to Christ.

...then **needs**

OK, so we need to look first to Christ. We need to look outwards to his example. But now we can work out my gift, right? Not yet! We've got some more outwards looking to do. When it comes to ministry we need to first look to Christ, then to the needs around us. In fact, when we do that, and start throwing ourselves into meeting needs we can see all around us, we might start using gifts we never knew we had.



a growing relationship with **God**, especially through personal Bible reading and prayer

growing relationships with **other believers**, especially through the small group

growing relationships with those in their **family/household**, as servants

growing relationships with unbelievers, especially through **personal evangelism**

growing relationships with the **whole church** in mission, serving in a ministry team



ideas for discussion

Philippians 2 talked about "looking to the interests of others".

✦ What 'interests' (needs) around you are you aware of:

- in your small group?
- in the wider church family?
- in the wider community?

✦ What are you presently doing to play a part in meeting those needs? How can you grow in this?



...then character

OK, so we need to look first to Christ. Then we need to look to the needs of others around us. But now it's time to work out my gift, right? Still not yet! When it comes to serving others, there's something the Bible talks much more about than gifts. It's our character. It's what Galatians 5 calls the fruit of the spirit. There's only a handful of passages about gifts in the New Testament. But every page challenges our character, in growing more like Jesus. We will get to the issue of gifts shortly, but more important is our character whatever gift we have, whatever ministry team we join...

the three strands...

The 'meeting one-to-one' ministry paper introduced the idea of three strands. There are three interwoven strands that must be developed in every believer. The three strands are:

- ✦ theological development
- ✦ personal godliness
- ✦ ministry skills

It's about head, heart and hands. It's about the whole person.

Once you've completed this paper it might be worth, if you haven't recently done so, looking again at the 'one-to-one planner' on page 3 of the meeting one-to-one paper. The step to join a ministry team needs to be taken within that broader context of growth. Talk, plan and pray about how to keep growing in each of the strands.

That's very much the theme continued in this 'joining a ministry team' paper. To serve in ministry means growing as a whole person in Christ. There's much more to consider than the issue of gifts alone. It's about theological development: growing in our knowledge of Christ and the truth about him. It's about growing in our personal godliness: having the attitude and character of Christ. Only in this context should we then also talk about growing ministry skills or giftedness.

Have a look at our starting passage again—1 Timothy 4. You'll notice how all three strands are present. Timothy is to *know* and proclaim the truth in the face of lies. He is not just to watch his doctrine closely, however, but his *life* as well. And it's in that rich context he is to exercise his ministry *gifts*.

You'll notice printed along the bottom of the one-to-one planner, verse 15 from our 1 Timothy 4 passage: *"be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress"*. The whole person!



investigate

read Galatians 5:16:26

1. What will it mean to live by the Spirit (verse 16)?

2. What is inconsistent with living by the Spirit (verses 19-21, 26)?

3. What is consistent with living by the Spirit (verses 22-25)?



think & apply

4. Paul talks about crucifying the sinful nature (see also 2:20-21). What needs to be 'killed-off' to grow Christ's character in you?

5. What aspects of the fruit of the Spirit need to grow more in your character?

6. Why will this sort of growth be essential to serving effectively in a ministry team?



ideas for discussion

Paul calls the Corinthians to "follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). We need to choose role models for ministry. But we need to choose them well.

Who has played a part in showing Christ to you by their example in ministry? What can you learn from their example?

now about gifts...

We've finally got there. The question of your gifts. But there's one more thing to sort out first. John, in our introduction, was convinced he had gifts for kids' talks. But was anyone else? In the biblical pattern, as in 1 Tim 4, it's better for leaders to 'commission' people than for them to put themselves forward. Leaders need to recognise gifts in people and encourage them to use them, as Paul and the elders did with Timothy. So it's time for you and your small group leader to talk about the possibilities. That way we won't repeat the other mistake made—with Melinda—of doing nothing.



read 1 Peter 4:7-11

investigate

1. Why does Peter say prayer is essential (verse 7)?

2. What does he reinforce for us about character (verse 8)?

3. What 'gifts' does he urge us all to pursue (verses 9-10)? Why?

4. What attitude should we have, whatever our gift (verse 10)?

5. What two categories does Peter place all gifts into (verse 11)?

6. What is the focus he calls everyone to have (verse 11)?



think & apply

7. What do you think is the difference between 'speaking' and 'serving' gifts? Isn't 'speaking' also a way of serving?

8. Why might all ministry teams need both people with 'speaking' gifts and people with 'serving' gifts (see also Acts 6:1-7)?



ideas for discussion

After our long-promised search for your gift, the result is surprising. On the one hand, the picture is so much simpler. There are only two basic gifts: speaking & serving. Even the more detailed lists in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 can be summarized into these two categories.

✦ *discuss with your leader: are your gifts more in speaking or serving?*

On the other hand, the picture is more challenging. The biggest questions for us in joining a ministry team aren't about *gifts* but about *attitude, character* and growth as a *whole person* in the three strands of theological development, personal godliness and ministry skills.

✦ *discuss with your leader: how can you "make progress" in your overall growth and training as a Christian?*

joining a ministry team...

We've covered a lot of ground:

- ✦ focus on Christ
- ✦ look to the needs all around you
- ✦ grow in Christian character
- ✦ & you'll start using 'gifts' you never knew you had
- ✦ with your leader, discuss where your gifts more lie: speaking or serving (in other ways)
- ✦ look at the ministries below—where could these gifts be used? where are the needs?
- ✦ don't make John's mistake by thinking too narrowly—there's most likely a number of different ministry teams you could serve in and ways of serving in them.
- ✦ don't make Melinda's mistake by doing nothing—work out a plan to see what's involved in a particular ministry team by meeting with its leader.

✦ MINISTRY TEAMS

- creche ministry
- kids church ministry
- kids club ministry
- primary school scripture
- youth ministry
- high school lunchtime groups
- university ministry
- pre-school mums ministry
- support ministries

✦ MAIN MEETING MINISTRY

- welcoming ministry
- music ministry
- audio ministry
- preaching that connects
- kids talks
- leading church
- setup-pieces/drama
- bible readings & prayers
- child protection

There are ministry papers available for these ministries, to work through with the relevant leader. You will then also need to work through a 'child protection' ministry paper.