

# God's Building: Is Every Member Really a Minister?

Hennie Swart

## ephesians 4.11-13

<sup>11</sup>And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of **ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **mature** manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...

- Do we really believe that 'every member is a minister'?

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Mentors  
Ministry  
Maturity

## three common myths

1. The Qualification myth:



"I'd like to start exercising, but I'm not fit enough yet!"

<sup>11</sup>And he gave the **Mentors**

<sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of **ministry**,

<sup>13</sup>until we all attain to **maturity**.

- Count 11, 12, 13, not 11, 13, 12!
- You cannot reach maturity without doing ministry any more than you can reach fitness without doing exercise.
- "Every member is a minister," vs. "Every mature member is a minister."
- You're born fully human and born again fully Christian!
- But this kind of ministry is risky/messy!

"Anything worth doing is worth doing imperfectly the first time."  
– Tim Keller

- Do we celebrate the process (failure) or the result (success)?
- Are we consumers who expect a perfect entertainment or are we disciples who expect imperfect engagement.

'It's better to fail at doing something than succeed at doing nothing.'

## three common myths

**2. The Outsourcing myth:**

I wish I could outsource my exercise.



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You cannot outsource the things you need to do for personal growth.

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<sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of **ministry**,

<sup>13</sup>until we all attain to **maturity**.

- 'we all' = 'the saints' = the members.
- The Mentors don't do the work of the ministry, the members do!
- The means of reaching maturity is both giving and receiving ministry.

## giving and receiving

You cannot give what you have not received [Matt 10.8: Freely you have received, freely give.], but 'It's more blessed to give than to receive.' [Acts 20.35]

- Think of the best gift you've ever received – how did it make you feel?
- Most think it's more blessed to receive.
- What does 'blessed' mean (Num 6.24)?
- Notice the word 'more' → comparison.
- E.g. Sea of Galilee vs Dead Sea
- E.g. Breathing in and out.

## Ephesians 4.15-16

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- 'speaking the truth in love' = ministry
- 'grow up' = maturity
- Who is 'joined and held together' by you?
- 'each part' = every member.

## three common myths

**3. The Feel-good myth:**

I exercised once, but found I was allergic to it. My skin flushed and my heart raced. I got sweaty and short of breath. Very dangerous.



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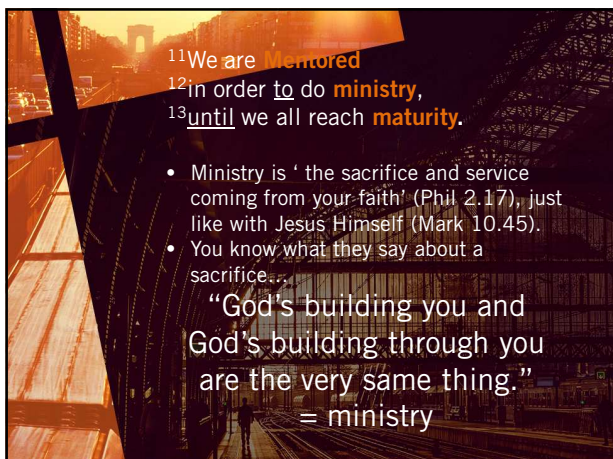
If it doesn't feel good to you, it can't be good for you!

<sup>11</sup>We are **Mentored**

<sup>12</sup>in order to do **ministry**,

<sup>13</sup>until we all reach **maturity**.

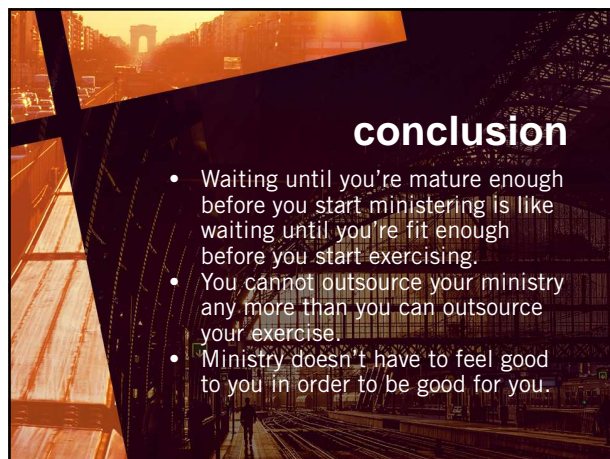
- If the result (our maturity) is to be like Christ, then the process (our ministry) should be Christlike too.
- Ministry cannot be comfortable because for the most part we don't grow in a comfort zone.
- Just because you find ministry difficult and inconvenient doesn't mean you're allergic to it!



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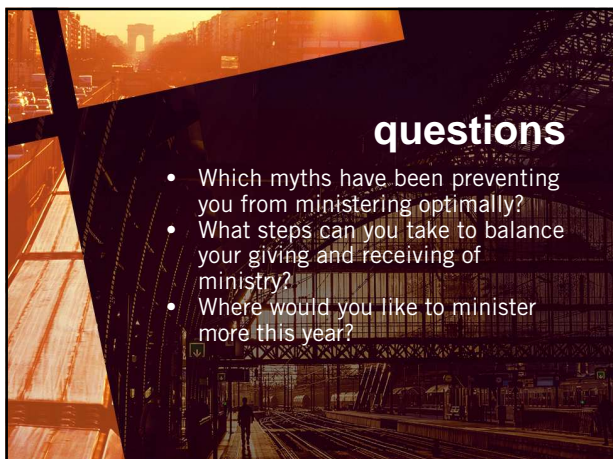
- Ministry is ' the sacrifice and service coming from your faith' (Phil 2.17), just like with Jesus Himself (Mark 10.45).
- You know what they say about a sacrifice...

“God's building you and  
God's building through you  
are the very same thing.”  
= ministry



## conclusion

- Waiting until you're mature enough before you start ministering is like waiting until you're fit enough before you start exercising.
- You cannot outsource your ministry any more than you can outsource your exercise.
- Ministry doesn't have to feel good to you in order to be good for you.



## questions

- Which myths have been preventing you from ministering optimally?
- What steps can you take to balance your giving and receiving of ministry?
- Where would you like to minister more this year?