

GIVING AWAY MINISTRY

One of the greatest hindrances to making disciples the way that Jesus made disciples is when leaders try to do everything themselves and fail to entrust real responsibility to others. This usually comes down to a pride issue. It's when we believe that nobody else can do what we do or we don't want others to do what we do so that we get all the recognition for it. Jesus knew that He only had 3 years to do His earthly ministry. Jesus could not afford to minister in such a way that made the continued reach of the church dependent on His presence. If He did that, the work of reaching the world and building a family for God would have ended with His resurrection and ascension. The most effective leaders lead by raising other leaders and giving ministry away to them. They lead by "working themselves out of a job".

Read John 21:15-17

3 times Jesus tells Peter that He wants Him to feed His lambs. Taking over the ministry that he had first come to do, described in John 15

Read Acts 1:6-9

Jesus, as he is about to ascend to heaven, tells His disciples that He is entrusting them with the responsibility of being His witnesses across the known world.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

The great commission is essentially Jesus saying now that I've prepared you, I am giving to you the work that I came to do.

Discuss: What are the problems that are created in ministries where everything is built around one person?

Humbling yourself

The first key to giving away ministry is getting over ourselves. Too often when we see fruit in ministry (which is a good thing) the enemy tries to make us believe it is all about us, and that our success is ultimate (which is idolatry).

Read 1 Cor. 3:5-8; 4:6-7, Romans 12:3-8

By reminding ourselves of the gospel we remember some important truths.

1. God does not love me or accept me based on what I do for Him.
2. God chooses the weak of the world to shame the strong.
3. God typically uses the weak things of the world to shame the strong, that He may be glorified, not us.

We also must learn to believe that it is better for the kingdom that others are equipped to lead with us and even in our place.

Commissioning and Challenging

Another key to giving away ministry is speaking affirmation and challenge into the lives of those you are entrusting with responsibility.

When Jesus was preparing His disciples to do what He was entrusting to them to do, He spoke words of life into them. (John 14:12, John 15:16, Matthew 16:17-18)

He also challenged them to rise to the occasion even though things would be hard. (Matthew 10:16-23)

Once we have given people a vision for what they are to do and encouraged them, we should commission them with responsibility.

Discuss: In what ways would you commission and challenge someone else to start a d-group?

Taking your hands off

Another key to giving away ministry is allowing people to try, make mistakes, and grow without trying to fix everything for them. It is impossible for people to learn to trust God and lead in ministry if we are constantly managing what they do.

We must let them feel the full responsibility of planning, organizing, and following up with what has been entrusted to them.

(Acts 20:17; 36-38)

Staying in touch for encouragement

The last key to giving away ministry is keeping up with people for continued encouragement. We should be praying for them and with them. Also reminding them to continue to fight the good fight and run the race with endurance.

Discuss: What are some of the most difficult things about giving away ministry?

How does giving ministry away make discipleship more about God's glory than our own?

What kinds of things keep you from giving away responsibility?

What are some of the changes we would need to make in order to entrust ministry to others?

Pray

Ask God for help to see giving away ministry as gain as well as for the humility and strategy to do so.