

MY PRIORITY MINISTRY

The main reason I come to the house of God is to minister to Him.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ When it comes to choosing a church to attend, many people will base their choice on the type of programs that particular church has to offer.
- ❖ There are even some cases where people come to the church in times of crisis, expecting that the church will meet their particular need, such as a bill payment.
- ❖ It may surprise many of us to realize that Tabernacle worship or 'early church' gatherings were not instituted for the primary purpose of providing social services to those who attended. The primary focus of these meetings was to minister to God!
- ❖ This is highlighted in Acts 13:1-3, where the second verse tells us that as the prophets and teachers of the church in Antioch gathered together, they "ministered to the Lord and fasted."
- ❖ Many translations of the Bible use the word "ministered" or "worshiped", while a few others use the word "served." These are three translations of the original Greek verb *leitourgeō*, which may remind people the English word "liturgy." (*Liturgy: "a form or structure by which Christian worship is conducted."*)
- ❖ *Leitourgeō* is a combination of two words: *lēitos*, which means "public" and *ergos*, which means "working." The meaning of *leitourgeō* is 'public working' or 'public service'.
- ❖ Of course, when Luke uses this term in Acts 13, he is not speaking of public works, but rather the service of worship we offer to God in the sanctuary, from which we get our terms "church service" or "worship service."
- ❖ In Old Testament times, the word typically used for ministry before the Lord was "*šārat*." It describes the priests' ministry in the Tabernacle (e.g. Exodus 28:35, 29:30, 30:20, 35:19, 1 Chronicles 23:13); Samuel's ministry (e.g. 1 Samuel 2:11, 2:11, 3:1); and the Levites' ministry in music (e.g. 1 Chron. 6:32, 16:4, 2 Chron. 31:2). Everything the priests and Levites did was included in the concept of *šārat*. They offered sacrifices, they taught the word of God, they conducted the feast celebrations, and they sang and led the people in praise to God.
- ❖ This service of worship and ministry to God takes various forms:
 - Like the priests, we are responsible to represent God in the sanctuary (and in our various communities).
 - o We teach and preach the word of God in our worship services, Sunday School classes, Life Group meetings, prayer meetings, prison services, etc.
 - o We testify and give witness to the goodness of God in our lives.
 - o We present our bodies as living sacrifices to God; this is our "spiritual service of worship" (Romans 12:1).

KEY SCRIPTURE: Acts 13:1-3

- Like the Levites, we are responsible for the care and maintenance of the house of God and for worshiping Him in the sanctuary.
 - o We are diligent in preparing the sanctuary for worship.
 - o Those with gifting in music lead the congregation in praise and worship to God (*everyone* is involved in this activity, both the worship leaders and the congregation).
 - o We make it our duty to meet the needs of others, like the "Good Samaritan" in Luke 10:30-37, knowing that we are ministering and serving Jesus Himself (Matt. 25:34-40).
 - o We minister to God, worship and serve Him in prayer and fasting like the prophets and teachers in Acts 13:1-3, or like Anna in Luke 2:36-37.
- ❖ There is a major difference between our modern concept of what 'church' is all about versus the biblical concept of church activity. In truth, we are the Church, and everything we do in our lives should be done with the full appreciation that we are ministering to God!
- ❖ Some people have left churches and gone their own way because, in their view, they have not been recognized and given certain positions of prominence. They fail to realize that every one of us has an extremely important "position" in the church: "Worshiper." There is no greater position offered in the kingdom of God.
- ❖ This is my priority ministry. My focus isn't on how much more I can receive from God and His church, but on being very conscious of my duty, privilege and responsibility to minister to Him.
- ❖ In light of what God has done and continues to do in my life, it is incumbent upon me to return my praise, thanksgiving and worship to Him.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. What first prompted you to attend church? Was it a matter of "your parents made you," or was it a conscious decision? Was there a point at which attending church became a personal priority?
2. What has kept you in church when things haven't gone your way or when you haven't been "recognized" for a deed?
3. What do you believe is your "worship ministry" (praying, fasting, singing, etc.)? Do you feel that it is a priority to you? If not, is there something you can change to make serving God a priority?

Prayer Time

"Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that You're my God." *This* is my priority ministry: to worship You, oh Lord. Amen.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)

👉 (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE
WORD

Start-up: Define the word "priority." What are some signs that something has priority in our lives?