

Equipping The Saints For Ministry



**Studies Designed To Encourage
Every Member Involvement**

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To God Be The Glory!

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Equipping The Saints For Ministry

The Providential Necessity

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ep 4:7-16**, we see where Christ has given “gifts” to His church...
 - a. These “gifts” are such functions as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers
 - b. Some of these “gifts” were temporary
 - 1) Such as apostles and prophets, for their work relates to the establishing the foundation of the Lord’s church - **Ep 2:19-22**
 - 2) Once the foundation had been laid, their work as such was completed
 - c. Other “gifts” are permanent
 - 1) Such as evangelists, pastors, and teachers
 - 2) For their work of adding to and building up the body of Christ continues to be needed
 - 3) Building upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, this work is ongoing - cf. **1 Co 3:9-11**

2. The purpose of these “gifts” (offices, if you will) is defined by Paul in **Ep 4:12...**
 - a. *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry”*
 - b. *“for the edifying of the body of Christ”*

3. **“Equipping The Saints For Ministry”**, then, is an important function of those who serve as evangelists, pastors, and teachers...
 - a. Indeed, it is a major reason why we assemble together - cf. **He 10:24-25**
 - b. Titus, a young preacher, was instructed by Paul time and again to work toward this end:
 - 1) *“Remind them...to be ready for every good work”* - **Ti 3:1**
 - 2) *“...these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.”* - **Ti 3:8**
 - 3) *“And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”* - **Ti 3:14**

4. As a minister of the gospel of Christ...
 - a. I certainly have a responsibility in the area of evangelism - cf. **2 Ti 4:5**
 - b. But if I am to “fulfill my ministry”, I must think in terms beyond my own personal work as an evangelist
 - c. I must also give thought to how I can contribute toward “equipping the saints for ministry”

5. Thus with this lesson, I begin a series of studies designed to...
 - a. Point out **the “necessity”** for a church to focus on “equipping the saints for ministry”
 - b. Stress the need for, and the value of, **diversity of function** in the body of Christ
 - c. **Provide direction** on how we, as a local congregation of Christ, can facilitate “equipping the saints for ministry”

[In the first two lessons, I want to emphasize the “need” for a congregation to be concerned about equipping its members for service. For unless we appreciate the necessity, we are not likely to possess the motivation required to carry through with the challenge we face.

There is first of all, “**The Providential Necessity**” for equipping the saints for ministry. To understand what I mean by that, consider that...]

I. THE LORD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH

A. “I WILL MY BUILD MY CHURCH”...

1. Jesus made His promise in **Mt 16:18**
 - a. Certainly this promise pertains to the “establishment” of the church
 - b. But I believe we have good reason to say that Jesus is still building His church
2. As the “head” of the body, the church (**Ep 1:22,23**), we should not be surprised to see that He is very much involved in the “expansion” of the church!
3. In fact, in nearly every example of conversion recorded in the book of Acts, the Lord worked in some way to create the opportunity for the person to hear the gospel...

B. EXAMPLES OF THE LORD’S INVOLVEMENT...

1. The Lord waited until thousands were gathered in Jerusalem to pour out the Spirit and let Peter preach the first gospel sermon - **Ac 2**
2. Philip was sent toward Gaza where he would meet the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:26-28**
3. The Lord saw to it that Saul and Ananias would get together - **Ac 9:10-18**
4. Likewise, it was the Lord who saw to it that Cornelius would have an opportunity to hear the gospel from Peter - **Ac 10**
5. The evangelization of Europe (beginning with the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian jailor) occurred after the “Macedonian Call” led Paul and his companions in that direction - **Ac 16**

C. THE WONDERFUL PROVIDENCE OF GOD...

1. Granted, the above examples are in keeping with the miraculous events surrounding the establishment of the Lord’s church
2. However, I propose that they illustrate a principle that is just as valid for us today...
 - a. The Lord knows the hearts of all men, and still seeks those who are seeking Him - cf. **2 Chr 16:9**
 - b. He will make sure that those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” will somehow be “filled” - cf. **Mt 5:6**
3. This is where the providence of God comes in...
 - a. If someone, somewhere, is seeking to do God’s will (as was the eunuch, Cornelius, and Lydia)...
 - b. ...the Lord will give the one seeking truth an opportunity to come across one prepared to do the teaching
4. Thus Paul viewed those who taught others as “God’s fellow-workers” - **1 Co 3:5-9**
 - a. They are simply servants through whom the Lord gave opportunity
 - b. It is God who is giving the increase

[So the Lord is very much involved in the “expansion” of His church, and can do much through His providential workings in the affairs of men. Of course, how useful “we” can be to the Lord in His providence is dependent upon our willingness to prepare and be available for service...]

II. THE LORD “OPENS DOORS” FOR THOSE PREPARED TO SERVE

A. THE SCRIPTURES OFTEN SPEAK OF “AN OPEN DOOR”...

1. Some doors the Lord opened...
 - a. An “open door” for Paul at Ephesus - **1 Co 16:9**
 - b. Another “open door” at Troas (though not fully utilized by Paul) - **2 Co 2:12-13**
2. But doors are opened only when people are prepared to be used by the Lord - **Re 3:8**

B. IF WE DESIRE TO HAVE DOORS OPENED, WE MUST PREPARE OURSELVES...

1. To be useful to the Master, we must be prepared for every good work - cf. **2 Ti 2:20-22**
2. This applies to congregations as well as individuals...
 - a. Individuals must prepare themselves to be able to teach, or to lead souls to those ready to teach
 - b. Congregations must be ready to assimilate new converts into the family of God where they can be nurtured during a vital stage of their new life in Christ
3. What if we as individuals and as a congregation are not prepared?
 - a. Can we really expect the Lord to use us in His providence?
 - 1) Who can He use to teach?
 - 2) Who can He use to encourage?
 - 3) Who can He use to serve?
 - b. Can we really expect Him to “open a door” for a congregation if it is made up of uncaring, and therefore unprepared, Christians?

CONCLUSION

1. So there is “**The Providential Necessity**” for us to be concerned about “**Equipping The Saints For Ministry**”...
 - a. If we wish to be a “light” for the Lord in our community, we must develop our ability to “shine”
 - b. If we wish to be “salt” that He can use, we must develop our “flavor”
2. In our next lesson, we shall examine the “necessity” from another angle, what I call “**The Practical Necessity**” for equipping the saints for ministry

Dear brother or sister, are you doing what you can to make yourself “useful to the Master”?

Equipping The Saints For Ministry

The Practical Necessity

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson, we made the following observations...
 - a. That Christ gave “gifts” to His Church - **Ep 4:7-10**
 - b. That such “gifts” included such functions as “evangelist, pastors, teachers” - **Ep 4:11**
 - c. That the goal of those so employed is to “equip the saints for ministry” - **Ep 4:12-16**
 - d. That the Lord is still building His Church, opening doors for those prepared to serve - **Ac 14:27; 1 Co 16:9; Co 2:12; Co 4:3**
 - e. That if we desire the Lord to open doors for us, we must be prepared to serve, both as individuals and as a congregation - **2 Ti 2:20-21; Re 3:8**
2. Thus we have “**the providential necessity**” to be concerned about equipping the saints for ministry...
 - a. This needs to be a concern we have as individuals
 - b. And it should be a concern we have as a local congregation
3. Before proceeding further, I thought it might serve well to describe what I call “**The Practical Necessity**” for equipping the saints for ministry

[In other words, from a practical viewpoint, any congregation that wishes to grow must give serious consideration to “equipping the saints for ministry”. To understand what I mean, consider the challenge of maintaining consistent church growth...]

I. THE “REVOLVING DOOR” SYNDROME

A. MANY CHURCHES HAVE LITTLE TROUBLE GAINING MEMBERS...

1. Some are very diligent in spreading the gospel, and people are obedient to the Lord
2. Others are blessed to live in growing areas, and Christians look for a church when they move in to the area

B. BUT MOST CHURCHES HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING MEMBERS...

1. They lose members about as fast as they get them
 - a. New converts become weak in the faith, and drift away
 - b. Christians new to the area attend for awhile, and then look elsewhere
2. It has been well documented that many churches cannot break beyond the “75 barrier” or the “200 barrier”
 - a. Both barriers are related to “group dynamics” (principles that affect people’s ability to relate to one another in a particular group)
 - b. But the problem basically boils down to this: growth does not continue, because people are not being assimilated into the “family life” of the congregation

[Some people do not really care about church growth, being happy to maintain “the status quo.” But we are talking about souls here, not numbers, and any true Christian will have a concern on what can be done to add souls to the body of Christ!

The solution to the “revolving door syndrome” actually has several different elements. But in keeping with our theme of “equipping the saints for ministry”, let me focus on one essential element...]

II. INVOLVEMENT OF EVERY MEMBER

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERY MEMBER INVOLVEMENT...

1. In his book Why Churches Grow, Flavil R. Yeakley emphasized the importance of every member getting involved in some way or another
2. “The more involved a person becomes in the work of the congregation, the more important the congregation becomes in his life. It logically follows, therefore, that **a congregation which offers people many opportunities for involvement would be more successful in attracting and keeping converts** than would a congregation which offers few opportunities for involvement.” (p. 40)
3. “Total evangelism includes more than reaching the lost. It also includes involving the members in the work of the local congregation. **If a congregation does not use its members it loses them...the congregations with the highest dropout rate were the congregations with the lowest involvement level.**” (p. 113-114)
4. “If a congregation can maintain a high involvement level, its conversion rate will be higher, its dropout rate will be lower, and thus its net growth rate will be higher.” (p. 44, 45)

B. THE CHALLENGE OF INVOLVING MEMBERS...

1. Yeakley also addressed the challenge a congregation faces to involve every member, especially when it starts to grow...
2. “In general, the larger the congregation the lower the involvement level...Why does the involvement level tend to decrease as size increases?...**The problem with the larger congregations is that they have not been able to increase the number of task assignments fast enough to keep pace with their expanding membership.**” (p. 41, 42,43)
3. “Actually, **the real problem was not always the ACTUAL roles-to-members ratio, but was sometimes the PERCEIVED roles-to-member ratio.** In other words, a larger congregation might actually have more than enough specific task assignments to go around, but the members might not be aware of the many ways in which they could get involved.” (p. 43)
4. “If a congregation has a good actual roles-to-member ratio but a low perceived roles-to-members ratio, the problem is one of communication...**A congregation can have a high involvement level no matter how large it becomes--if:**
 - a. **...that congregation will do the necessary organizational work so as to have a high actual roles-to-member ratio**
 - b. **...the congregation’s leaders will communicate in the right way so as to have a**
5. So the challenge is not just to have something for people to do, but letting them know what is available to do!

CONCLUSION

1. Thus “equipping the saints for ministry” is a practical necessity as well as a providential one
2. If we want the Lord to open doors for us so we can be used by Him to reach lost souls, we must

equip ourselves to be of service (**The Providential Necessity**)

3. If we want those who come our way to feel that this congregation is important to them and vice versa, we must provide opportunity for every member to serve! (**The Practical Necessity**)
4. Indeed, if we desire growth in the body of Christ, **every member** must be doing his or her part, if the body of Christ is going to grow as it should! - cf. **Ep 4:16**

Having emphasized in these first two lessons the **need** for “equipping the saints for ministry”, our next study will focus on the diversity of function in the body of Christ... - cf. **Ro 12:4-8**

Equipping The Saints For Ministry

Diversity Of Function In The Body

INTRODUCTION

1. “**Equipping The Saints For Ministry**” has been the theme for this present series of lessons...
 - a. Based upon the thought that an important work of the Lord’s church is to prepare each member of the body of Christ to do his or her part
 - b. This thought is taken from Paul’s comments in **Ep 4:11-16**
2. I have sought to illustrate that “equipping the saints for ministry” is both a **providential** necessity as well as a **practical** one...
 - a. If we want the Lord to open doors for us so we can be used by Him to reach lost souls, we must equip ourselves to be of service (**The Providential Necessity**)
 - b. If we want those who come our way to feel that this congregation is important to them and vice versa, we must provide opportunity for every member to be able to serve! (**The Practical Necessity**)
3. Indeed, if we desire growth in the body of Christ, **every member** must be doing his or her part!
- cf. **Ep 4:16**
4. At this point, I believe there is value in stressing the truth that there must be **diversity of function** in the body of Christ...
 - a. This point is often overlooked when churches think about how they might involve every member
 - b. Yet failure to appreciate this truth can hinder true growth, and at the same time be very frustrating for the members of the body of Christ

[Consider the following points taken from Paul’s comments to the churches at Rome and Corinth...]

I. THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS MANY MEMBERS

A. TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH, PAUL STRESSED THIS POINT...

1. Just as the physical body, though one, has many members - **1 Co 12:12a**
2. So it is with the body of Christ - **1 Co 12:12b,14**

B. HE TOLD THE BRETHERN IN ROME THE SAME THING...

1. As we have many members in our physical body - **Ro 12:4a**
2. So the body of Christ is made up of many who are members of one another - **Ro 12:5**

[This point of the similarity between the physical body containing many members and the body of Christ having many members is a simple one, but it helps prepare us for the next point that is often neglected...]

II. NOT ALL MEMBERS HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION

A. THIS POINT IS MADE MOST CLEARLY TO THE SAINTS AT ROME...

1. All the members do not have the same function - **Ro 12:5b**
2. We have gifts differing according to the grace given to us - **Ro 12:6-8**

B. BUT IT IS IMPLIED IN WRITING TO THE CORINTHIANS AS WELL...

1. God has appointed several different functions in the church - **1 Co 12:28**
2. The rhetorical questions then asked by Paul imply that not all members have the same function - **1 Co 12:29-30**

C. INDEED, OTHER NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS IMPLY THE SAME...

1. James, in his warning about becoming teachers - **Ja 3:1**
2. Peter, in his exhortation to be good stewards of the “manifold” grace of God - **1 Pe 4:10-11**

D. FAILURE TO APPRECIATE THIS POINT CAN BE DETRIMENTAL...

1. Detrimental to individual members
 - a. When members are led to believe that all Christians are to be alike, serving in the same way, it encourages some Christians to be what they are not, nor ever can be
 - b. This leads to failure in their attempts to serve, which in turn can lead to discouragement and apathy
2. Detrimental to the function of the body itself
 - a. The body of Christ is designed by God to accomplish several functions (evangelism, edification, benevolence)
 - b. When people are expected to do the same thing, other important functions go undone

[This leads us to the final point I wish to make about diversity of function in the body of Christ...]

III. EVERY FUNCTION IS CRUCIAL TO THE OPERATION OF THE BODY

A. NO ONE CAN SAY THAT THEY OR THEIR ROLES ARE NOT IMPORTANT...

1. As Paul illustrated in **1 Co 12:15-20**
2. There is no place for low self-esteem among members of the body of Christ!

B. NO ONE CAN SAY THAT WHAT OTHERS DO IS NOT IMPORTANT...

1. As Paul illustrated in **1 Co 12:21-22**
2. There is no place for an arrogant independence among members of the body of Christ!

C. THIS PLACES A CHALLENGE BEFORE US...

1. First, to be aware of the different ways that members can serve in the body
2. Second, to encourage members to develop those functions that best suit their abilities and opportunities to serve
3. Third, to provide direction and opportunity for those willing and prepared to serve in their different functions

CONCLUSION

1. I plan to offer suggestions on how we might accept this challenge as the series continues
2. For now, though, I hope we appreciate more fully the points made in this lesson...
 - a. The body of Christ has many members
 - b. Not all members have the same function
 - c. Every function is crucial to the operation of the body

3. In closing this lesson, let me offer this quote from Flavil Yeakley, taken from his book, Why Churches Grow, which confirms the points I have been making...

“Some congregations have been built around one particular kind of ministry or program. In those congregations, the only members who are really involved are those taking part in that one special program. But the church is a body. A body must have diversity if it is to survive. **Evangelism, edification, benevolence, and worship are functions required of every local congregation. Successful congregational development requires a balanced program involving many areas of activity.**” (p. 114)

Equipping The Saints For Ministry

Areas Of Service In The Body

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson we noticed the following truths about body of Christ...
 - a. The body of Christ has many members - cf. **1 Co 12:12,14**
 - b. Not all members have the same function - cf. **Ro 12:4,6a**
 - c. Every function is crucial to the operation of the body - cf. **1 Co 12:21-22; Ep 4:15-16**
2. Therefore the challenges we face are these...
 - a. To be aware of the different ways that members can serve in the body
 - b. To encourage members to develop those functions that best suit their abilities and opportunities to serve
 - c. To provide direction and opportunity for those willing and prepared to serve in their different functions
3. In an effort to meet the first challenge, in this study we will...
 - a. Summarize the four basic areas of service in the body of Christ
 - b. Provide examples of roles that people can fulfill within each basic area of service

[Let's begin with an area of service in the body that is evident every time we assemble...]

I. THE AREA OF "PUBLIC WORSHIP"

A. PUBLIC WORSHIP AS AN AREA OF SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. We are commanded not to forsake our assembling together, for therein we can exhort one another to love and good works - **He 10:24-25**
2. There are certain commands that we can keep only in the context of our coming together
 - a. The command to observe the Lord's Supper - cf. **1 Co 11:20-34**
 - b. The command to lay by in store - cf. **1 Co 16:1-2**
3. We have an example of the early Christians meeting on the first day of the week to carry out such commands - cf. **Ac 20:7**
4. Guidelines for our assemblies have been given...
 - a. "Let all things be done for edification" - **1 Co 14:26**
 - b. "Let all things be done decently and in order" - **1 Co 14:40**

B. SAMPLE "ROLES" IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC WORSHIP...

1. Those that direct the congregation in its worship...
 - a. Making announcements
 - b. Leading singing
 - c. Leading prayer
 - d. Reading Scriptures
 - e. Assisting in the Lord's Supper (Communion), and the Collection (Offering)
 - f. Offering short exhortations or invitations
 - g. Preaching sermons
2. Other roles that expedite the public worship...

- a. Serving as ushers
- b. Taking attendance
- c. Preparing the communion
- d. Taping the service (either video or audio)

[Perhaps you can think of other roles that fall into the framework of the public worship. But these should suffice to illustrate that there is room for service by people with varying abilities. Let's now consider...]

II. THE AREA OF "EDIFICATION"

A. EDIFICATION AS AN AREA OF SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. Edification, or building up the body of Christ, is a major function in the work of the church - cf. **Ep 4:11-16**
2. Much of our edification takes place in the public worship, but there other avenues as well
 - a. Congregational Bible study classes (Sunday morning and midweek classes)
 - b. Home Bible studies
 - c. Monthly or weekly bulletins

B. SAMPLE "ROLES" IN THE AREA OF EDIFICATION...

1. As part of the congregation's teaching curriculum
 - a. Teach adult classes
 - b. Teach children's classes (1-4 yrs, K-12th grade, college)
 - c. Teach special classes (ladies, singles, young marrieds, seniors)
 - d. Produce a church bulletin
2. As part of the congregation's follow-up program
 - a. Conduct home Bible studies with new converts or new members
 - b. Provide child care for those involved in home Bible studies
3. And let's not forget these two most important roles...
 - a. Elders (also known as bishops, pastors) - **Ac 20:17,28; 1 Pe 5:1-2; 1 Ti 3:1-7**
 - b. Deacons (servants qualified and duly appointed to assist the elders-bishops-pastors) - **Ph 1:1; 1 Ti 3:8-13**

[Again, this is just a sampling to illustrate there are many and diverse ways we can serve in the body of Christ. Of course, there is also..]

III. THE AREA OF "EVANGELISM"

A. EVANGELISM AS AN AREA OF SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ goes back to the "Great Commission" our Lord gave His disciples - cf. **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**
2. It is certainly an important function of the body of Christ - cf. **1 Pe 2:9-10**
3. A work that can be done by individuals, it can also be supported by local congregations - cf. **Ph 1:3-5; 4:15-16; 2 Co 11:7-9**

B. SAMPLE "ROLES" IN THE AREA OF EVANGELISM...

1. Write letters to visitors
2. Pay courtesy visit to visitors
3. Mail or hand out tracts, cards, flyers

4. Grade Bible correspondence courses
5. Conduct home Bible studies with prospects
6. Invite friends and neighbors to services, or to a home Bible study where someone else will do the teaching
7. Assist with baptisms (very helpful when they occur at all hours of the day)
8. Provide child care for those involved with home Bible studies
9. Travel to foreign countries, or support those who do

[There is a lot that can be done in the area of evangelism, no matter what one's ability may be at the present. But to public worship, edification, and evangelism, we can add yet another area of service...]

IV. THE AREA OF "BENEVOLENCE"

A. BENEVOLENCE AS AN AREA OF SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST...

1. The early church was noted for their love and support for one another
 - a. In times of great need they were willing to go to great extremes - **Ac 2:44-45; 4:32-35**
 - b. When they heard of their brothers' need in other places, they were quick to respond - **Ac 11:27-30; Ro 15:25-26; 2 Co 8:1-5**
2. As a function of the local church, it is apparent that it was limited in scope
 - a. Every example of congregational benevolent activity was only to needy saints
 - b. Even then there were limitations placed upon who the church was to support - **1 Ti 5:3-16**
3. But as individuals, Christians were encouraged to be benevolent toward all, whether believers or nonbelievers - cf. **Ga 6:10; Ja 1:27**

B. SAMPLE "ROLES" IN THE AREA OF BENEVOLENCE...

Please Note: Several of the roles listed below properly fall into the area of individual responsibility rather than the work of the local church. But since it is the work of the church to provide "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry" (**Ep 4:12**), I think it proper for the elders "to stir up love and good works" (**He 10:24**) and even provide some coordination of those activities we carry out as individual Christians (such as many churches do in providing for flowers on special occasions).

1. Toward the sick and shut-ins
 - a. Visit and care for the sick at the hospital
 - b. Visit and care for the sick at their homes
 - c. Visit and care for those confined to their homes
 - d. Telephone those sick and confined on a daily basis
 - e. Provide transportation to doctors, pharmacies, food stores
2. Toward the needy
 - a. Prepare clothes
 - b. Prepare food
 - c. Provide emergency shelter
 - d. Provide emergency child care
 - e. Provide emergency financial assistance
 - f. Provide transportation to services, stores
3. Miscellaneous
 - a. Prepare meals for the sick, bereaved, new mothers
 - b. Provide flowers for special occasions (e.g., sickness, funerals)

CONCLUSION

1. The list could go on and on, especially when we seek to list things that go beyond the work of the local congregation and into the area of individual responsibility; for example...
 - a. Arranging activities for young people
 - b. Arranging social activities for members
 - c. Minor repair work (painting, carpentry)
 - d. Cleaning the building, landscaping, maintaining the baptistery

2. My purpose has been to illustrate...
 - a. That there are many different ways to serve when you consider the different areas of service in the Lord's body: public worship, edification, evangelism, and benevolence
 - b. That even on an individual basis (i.e., not really a work of the congregation per se) there are things to be done that can contribute to the edifying of the body of Christ
 - c. That no matter how large a congregation can become, there are plenty of roles for the members to fulfill

3. Again, the challenges we face in "equipping the saints for ministry" are these...
 - a. To be aware of the different ways that members can serve in the body
 - b. To encourage members to develop those functions that best suit their abilities and opportunities to serve
 - c. To provide direction and opportunity for those willing and prepared to serve in their different functions

4. With this lesson I have sought to meet the first challenge, our next lesson will seek to address the remaining two

In the meantime, I hope you will be giving prayerful consideration as to how you are functioning as a member of the body of Christ...

Equipping The Saints For Ministry

Organizing For Service In The Body

INTRODUCTION

1. In “**Equipping The Saints For Ministry**”, the problem is not one of having enough things for people to do
2. We saw in our last lesson that there are many different things to be done, many different ways to serve as members of the body...
 - a. In the area of public worship
 - b. In the area of edification, evangelism and benevolence
 - c. In areas of individual service, in roles that are not the work of the local congregation per se
3. Even in large churches, the problem is not a lack of roles for the members, as Flavil Yeakley wrote in his book (“Why Churches Grow”) in reference to large churches:

“Actually, **the real problem was not always the ACTUAL roles-to-members ratio, but was sometimes the PERCEIVED roles-to-member ratio.** In other words, a larger congregation might actually have more than enough specific task assignments to go around, but the members might not be aware of the many ways in which they could get involved.” (p. 43)

3. As further suggested by Flavil Yeakley, the problem is one of **communication** and **organization**...
 - a. “If a congregation has a good actual roles-to-member ratio but a low perceived roles-to-members ratio, the problem is one of communication...”
 - b. “A congregation can have a high involvement level no matter how large it becomes--if...”
 - 1) “...that congregation will do the necessary organizational work so as to have a high actual roles-to-member ratio...”
 - 2) “...the congregation’s leaders will communicate in the right way so as to have a high perceived roles-to-members ratio.” (p. 44, 45)
4. Somehow, therefore, there needs to be in any congregation that desires to equip its saints for ministry...
 - a. A means of communicating to the members what roles are available
 - b. An organized method of encouraging the members to offer their service and coordinating their efforts

5. One tool that can help accomplish this goal is the “**Member Involvement Survey**”...

[**Please note:** I am simply offering suggestions for communicating with the members and organizing efforts to involve all who desire to serve. These suggestions are not “set in stone” and should be implemented only with the approval of the congregation and it’s leaders...]

I. THE “MEMBER INVOLVEMENT SURVEY”

A. A FORM FOR MEMBERS TO FILL IN...

1. With space for their name, address, phone number

2. With a list of roles available to members of the congregation
 3. With an option to indicate...
 - a. What they are willing to do now
 - b. What they think they would like to do in the future
- See sample “Member Involvement Survey”

B. MEMBERS COULD FILL IN THIS FORM...

1. When they first place membership, or when converted to Christ
2. On an annual basis, so as to...
 - a. Keep the members apprised as to the work that is available to be done (available roles may change in the course of a year)
 - b. Keep the elders apprised as to the work that the members are willing to do (people may be willing to try new roles as time goes on)

C. THE BENEFITS OF A “MEMBER INVOLVEMENT SURVEY”...

1. It lets the members know what different things are available for them to do
2. It lets the elders or leaders of the congregation what people are willing to do
3. It provides the preacher with some input that may help him focus his efforts
 - a. E.g., if there is an area in which no one is willing to offer their service, perhaps some teaching or preaching on that need may be in order
 - b. E.g., if several have indicated a desire to serve in a particular role in the present or future, then a special class for training might accommodate those desires

[Even if nothing else is done with a “Member Involvement Survey”, I know that it would help me in my efforts as an evangelist to do what I can to stimulate others to love and good works. But with the information taken from the survey, a little organization can go a long way to provide many opportunities for service. For example, consider another form...]

II. THE “LIST OF ROLES AND AVAILABLE VOLUNTEERS”

A. A FORM FOR EACH AREA OF SERVICE AND ITS ROLES...

1. Different forms for the areas of public worship, edification, evangelism benevolence, etc.
 2. Each form listing the various roles available in that area of service
 3. With a place for names of those who indicated their willingness to serve in the “Member Involvement Survey”
- See sample “List Of Roles And Available Volunteers”

B. WITH THESE FORMS...

1. Those charged with coordinating efforts in a particular area of service would know who is willing to do what
2. Some examples...
 - a. The person(s) preparing the schedule for public worship could use it to plan the services
 - b. The person(s) preparing the class curriculum would know who was available for teaching different classes
 - c. If a need for benevolence arose, the person(s) coordinating efforts in that area could know who to call on for help

[By taking information gathered from the “Member Involvement Survey” and using it to complete the “List Of Roles And Available Volunteers” for each area of service, a congregation can be a step closer

to involving all its members. But collecting this information alone is not going to get the work done. There is a need for those to coordinate efforts in the different areas, and to report the progress of such efforts to those with the proper oversight. To aid in this, there is yet one more form...]

III. THE “MEMBER INVOLVEMENT REPORT”

A. THIS “REPORT” IS BASED UPON AN IMPORTANT ASSUMPTION...

1. That the responsibility of coordinating member involvement in a particular area has been delegated; for example...
 - a. That someone is responsible for coordinating those involved in the area of public worship
 - b. That similar responsibilities have been given to other people in other areas
2. In a congregation with elders and deacons...
 - a. This responsibility might be given to deacons
 - b. Who in turn might enlist the help of responsible men and women, in those activities deemed appropriate
3. In a congregation without elders, responsible individuals might be appointed to help coordinate efforts in various areas

B. WITH THIS “REPORT”...

1. Information can be given on progress in fulfilling roles, accomplishing their functions, etc.
 2. Problems encountered in finding volunteers, accomplishing tasks, etc., can be reported to the leaders of the church
- See sample “Member Involvement Report”

CONCLUSION

1. With such information provided by...
 - a. The “**Member Involvement Survey**”
 - b. The “**List Of Roles And Available Volunteers**”
 - c. The “**Member Involvement Report**”...the congregation can be kept apprised of the involvement of any member
2. Indeed, the use of such forms can tell a lot about the members of a congregation...
 - a. Their desire (via the “**survey**”)
 - b. Their potential (via the “**list**”)
 - c. The opportunities they had to serve (via the “**report**”)
3. Again, let me stress that these are simply suggestions on how a congregation might...
 - a. Communicate with its members who desire to serve
 - b. Provide some sort of systematic method of seeing that those who desire to serve are given their opportunities
4. However one chooses to do it, let each congregation meet its design and purpose in some way by working toward having every member do their part in the body of Christ!

I hope that I have stimulated your thinking in this area with these lessons...

List Of Roles And Available Volunteers

Benevolence (I)

Visit Sick At Home	Visit Sick At Hospital	Visit Shut-ins	Visit People In Nursing Homes

Telephone Sick, Shut-ins	Provide Ride To Services	Provide Ride To Doctor, Stores	Provide Flowers On Special Occasions

