

Redeemer Presbyterian Church
“Ministries of Mercy- The Call of the Jericho Road”
(A study of the book by Timothy J. Keller, P&R Publishing, 1997.)

Session XI.
MOBILIZING THE CHURCH

“ We can actually plant mercy ministries through church-wide projects, the organizing of grass-roots mission groups, and careful program planning.” (Keller, p. 154)

This can be achieved in two modes:

Top Down: leadership develops and establishes a program; leaders get congregation involved and recruit, train, and supervise volunteers

Grass Roots: An individual or a group of laypeople approach leadership with an idea for a ministry. They establish the details, recruit and train workers, etc. under the general guidance of the leadership.

I. Four Steps for Planting Mercy Ministries

A. Initiate Church-Wide Projects

- Focus on a specific mercy need that everyone can be united on
- Short-term effort, or one with a definite time span
- Involve as many people as possible
- Make it something which can be run by the laity (not ministry staff)
- Make it an effort relatively assured of visible results

Examples: Food drive, baby shower (collecting baby and maternity clothes), habitat for humanity build week, hurricane Katrina aid, etc.

B. Grow Ministry Up through Spiritual Gifts

Understanding Every-Member Ministry

- From the pulpit: “every member is a minister; ministry is finding needs and meeting them with the goal to spread the kingship of Christ.
- We are **prophets** (Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:14) We are to exhort, counsel, teach, and evangelize.
- We are **priests** (Matt.27:51; Heb. 4:14-16) We must offer spiritual sacrifices and deeds of mercy.
- We are **kings**. (2 Cor. 10:3-5) We have authority over the world, the flesh, and the devil; we have divine weapons to demolish strongholds.

C. Organize Mission Groups

- **A Mission Group** meets mainly for outreach (not for nurture and support)
- Members are committed to the purposes of the group and to minimum disciplines of daily prayer and Bible study
- The group develops through the stages of the ministry, from study and fact finding to planning and praying to carrying out and overseeing the ministry
- A mission group is under the church’s leadership but is not controlled by the session
- A mission group is not a standing committee- it only exists as long as there are committed members who share a burden for the ministry.

D. Begin One Ministry From the Top

“To see the congregation as a whole truly become committed to the ministry of mercy, the officers should undertake one carefully designed ministry of mercy in which significant church resources are used.” (Keller, p. 167))

Ask these questions:

1. What are the most urgent needs here??
2. Who else has done anything to address this need?
3. Are there any laypeople whose gifts and calling appear to match the proposed program?

Steps for Program Planning:

1. Write a careful problem/need statement
2. Establish a goal or vision statement
3. Brainstorm and choose strategies
4. Develop the program
5. Design the Organization
6. Design evaluation

“Only if these measures are taken will we escape the middle-class captivity of most of our evangelical churches. A frightening proportion of our churches are trapped by what Frank Tillapaugh calls the ‘fortress church’ mentality. That mentality is made up of attitudes that may be conscious or unconscious: ‘Let them come to us! Our doors are open’ “ (Keller, p. 172)

For further reflection and study:

1. Is there an area of ministry which the Lord has particularly called, gifted, or inclined you toward?? How did you find this out? What has been your experience of working in this area?
2. What church-wide projects might we consider at Redeemer RIGHT NOW??
3. What are some of the ramifications of the “middle class captivity” to which Keller refers?

Note: All of these study notes are drawn from *Ministries of Mercy- The Call of the Jericho Road*, written by Timothy J. Keller. P&R Publishing, Second edition 1997. (available on Amazon.com; also on cvbbs.com , the Cumberland Valley Bible Book Service)

Mark **August 27** on your calendars (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE). Two deacons from Covenant PCA (Harrisonburg) will be with us to reflect on their experiences in mercy ministry.