

Ministry to the Lord: Our Highest Privilege and Calling

I. WHY WE KEEP A 24/7 WORSHIP SANCTUARY

A. We keep a 24/7 worship sanctuary in obedience to a specific assignment from the Lord. In May 1983, the Lord said, ***“I will establish 24-hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.”*** One privilege of keeping a 24/7 worship sanctuary is found in drawing near to God. In engaging in this assignment, we minister to God, release His power, and encounter His heart. In worship and prayer, we contend for a breakthrough of His power on our heart, ministry, and in revelation.

¹⁵But the priests...the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me... (Ezek. 44:15)

1. We ***minister to God*** by declaring His worth as a witness to how He is ministered to in heaven.

2. We ***labor in intercession*** to release God’s power to win the lost and revive the Church, etc.

3. We ***grow in revelation of the Word*** gaining insight into His will, ways, salvation, and plans.

4. We ***grow in intimacy with God*** by personally encountering Him by the indwelling Spirit. We receive greater grace to love and obey Him as we are fascinated by who He is and seeing the majestic beauty of God as our Father and of Jesus as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge.

II. GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO MINISTER TO HIM

A. The Levites ministered to God by standing before Him and blessing His name. They declared the truth about God back to Him. To minister to God or to bless God implies that it moves Him. It is glorious that God uses such terms in Scripture to describe what He wants from us. Standing is a term related to ministering to God: see the angels (Lk. 1:19; Rev. 8:2), Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:1), John the Baptist (Jn. 3:29), the two witnesses (Rev. 11:4), and the priests of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15), etc.

⁸At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi...to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. ⁹Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance... (Deut. 10:8-9)

B. In the Old Testament, God prioritized and greatly valued ministry to God (Ex. 28:1, 3, 4, 41; 29:1, 44; 30:30; 40:13, 15; Lev. 7:35; Deut. 10:8; 17:12; 21:5; 1 Sam. 2:11, 18; 3:1; 1 Chr. 15:2; 16:4; 23:13; 2 Chr. 13:10; 29:11; Isa. 6:2-3; 56:6-7; Jer. 33:22; Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:13, 15, 16; 45:4; Dan. 7:10; Joel 1:9, 13; 2:17; in the New Testament see Mt. 4:11; 27:55; Acts 6:4; 13:2; Rev. 1:5; 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-14; 7:10, 12, 15-17; 11:15, 17-18; 15:3-4; 16:5-7; 19:1-7).

¹Take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest...³Consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest...⁴So they shall make holy garments for Aaron...that he may minister to Me as priest. (Ex. 28:1-4)

¹³Aaron was set apart, he and his sons forever...to minister to Him... (1 Chr. 23:13)

- C. To minister to God includes worshiping Him (Ps. 145:1-3), meditating on His glorious name (Ps. 145:5), and interceding for a breakthrough of His power (Joel 2:17) that the supremacy of His name would be seen by others. All of the work related to keeping the sanctuary (both inside and outside the prayer room) is part of ministering to God. Worship flows out of response to *who He is* and *what He has done*. He is celebrated by worship. The basis of worship is seeing the beauty and majesty of God. Because Jesus' greatness is unsearchable, our worship of Him is unceasing.
- ¹I will extol You, my God...I will bless Your name forever...²Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. ³Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable...⁵I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty...⁶and I will declare Your greatness...⁷and shall sing of Your righteousness. (Ps. 145:1-7)*
- ¹⁷Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "Spare Your people...why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (Joel 2:17)*
- D. David established over 8,000 paid singers, musicians, and gatekeepers to minister to God by keeping the worship sanctuary in Jerusalem as their main vocation (1 Chr. 23:5 25:7).
- ⁴And he [David] appointed some of the Levites [singers] to minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD...³²They were ministering with music...and they served in their office according to their order...³⁷to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required... (1 Chr. 16:4, 32, 37)*
- E. Ministry to God was a priority to the apostles in the New Testament. *Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists where worship doesn't* (John Piper).
- ²As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)*
- ⁴We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:4)*
- F. We need revelation of the significance of ministry to the Lord. It is the highest ministry that all believers are called to. It is our privilege and responsibility. It is foundational to our identity and life calling to be occupied as priests (as the starting point of our ministry assignment). Worship and prayer seem out of place to our lives of productivity and efficiency, but since the Bible says they are important, many try to make time for them but without having revelation of their value.
- ⁹You are a...royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light... (1 Pet. 2:9)*
- G. Isaiah prophesied of the destiny of God's people being related to ministering to the Lord and loving His name and thus experience enjoyable prayer. We love Jesus' name, therefore we invest our time in prayer and in declaring His worth—calling all to love and obey Him.
- ⁶The foreigners [Gentiles] who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD...⁷Even those I will...make them joyful [enjoyable prayer] in My*

house of prayer...for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. (Isa 56:6-7, NAS)

III. GOD IS LOVE: LOVE MOVES GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

- A. Worship is an end in itself but it does not stop there. It results in a two way communication that connects our heart with God's heart. He is the most loving and relational being and is a very good communicator. Love moves God and His people. When we talk to Him, He responds to us in love. In worship, we gain insight about how He feels about Himself and how He feels about us. He tells us who He is and who we are to Him and what is on His heart.

¹⁶*God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God... (1 Jn. 4:16)*

- B. Declaring the truth about God back to Him with gratitude moves His heart (because of our voluntary love), transforms our heart (because of receiving more revelation), and changes the nations (by releasing His power). The Spirit teaches us best and we receive most in the context of dialogue with God that flows from gratitude with affection. *We must actually talk to Him.*

- C. Singing God's Word back to Him in worship causes us to internalize His Word. God's words are spirit and life; they impart God's life to us. Each time we verbalize the truth about God, it marks our mind and spirit and changes us. Each time, we receive a small impartation of His life, which illuminates our mind and tenderizes our heart. This process progressively renews our inner man. Just as a computer programmer rewrites many lines of code when developing a computer program, we "rewrite many lines of code" in our mind and heart through singing God's Word.

⁶³*The words that I [Jesus] speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (Jn. 6:63)*

- D. Worship and intercession for others causes multiplied blessings to return to the worshiper. Every prayer of blessing for another is a prayer that God returns back on you and your family. The nature of God is generous love. This requires that we receive more than what we give Him. We cannot touch consummate Love without love overflowing back to us with divine multiplication.

³⁸*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure...and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. (Lk. 6:38)*

IV. WHAT IS GOD SEEKING?

- A. Jesus affirmed that the Father seeks to be ministered to (or worshiped) by His people. The Father wants to be worshiped in spirit and truth or in spiritual reality. He wants us to engage our spirit with the Holy Spirit when we worship Him. If we talk to Him, He will talk with us.

²³*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* ²⁴*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (Jn. 4:23-24)*

- B. We must refuse to approach our worship sets in a “professional” way that only fulfills a duty. We set our heart to connect with the truths that we sing or speak in relationship with a real Person. The amazing simplicity is that talking to Him results in Him manifesting Himself to our heart. He is so generous and He delights to relate to us as our Father or Bridegroom. We must exert ourselves to take the reins of our mind in order to focus so that we actually talk to Him. If we do not do that, then our time in leading worship or sitting in the prayer room will burn us out.
- C. A premier example of ministry to God is Mary of Bethany—Jesus twice affirmed her publicly for her unusual devotion or ministry to Him (Lk. 10:42; Mk. 14:6). Jesus made four points about her devotion (Lk. 10:42): it is the one thing needed, it is good, it must be chosen, and it can remain (not be taken). It is difficult to engage with God without feeding regularly on His Word.
³⁹Mary...sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word...⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her. (Lk. 10:39-42)
- D. Mary took seriously her call to minister to God. To “waste” our musical talent, education, money, or good career opportunities is regarded by some as an unnecessary waste of one’s life.
³She broke the flask and poured it on His head. ⁴Some [apostles] were indignant...and said, “Why was this...oil wasted? ⁵It might have been sold for...300 denarii [a year’s wages] and given to the poor.” They [apostles] criticized her sharply. ⁶Jesus said, “Let her alone...she has done a good work for Me...” ⁹What this woman has done will be told as a memorial to her.” (Mk. 14:3-9)

V. THE PRIORITY OF MINISTERING TO GOD

- A. God is forever ministered to around His throne night and day.
¹⁰A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him [His throne, v. 9]. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. (Dan. 7:10)
⁸The four living creatures...do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy...!” (Rev. 4:8)
- B. I wonder how deeply touched the living creatures and saints are when they worship in the midst of glorious fire. No one can touch fire without being burned. How much more, when we connect with the most generous Being who is fiery love, will we be enriched by engaging with Him.
²I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast...standing on the sea of glass... ³They sing...the song of the Lamb... (Rev. 15:2-3)
- C. Ministry to God will be the highest calling on the on the earth forever. Amos prophesied of the restoration of David’s Tabernacle. The fullness of the Tabernacle of David speaks of Jesus ruling the whole earth in the Millennium based on 24/7 Davidic worship.
¹¹On that day I will raise up the Tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old... (Amos 9:11)
- D. It is inevitable that the priestly calling to minister to the Lord will one day cover the whole earth.

¹⁰Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, so that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. ¹¹For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations"... (Mal. 1:10-11)

¹¹My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense. (2 Chr. 29:11)