

How to Establish a Growing Church and Ministry for the Church Scattered

INTRODUCTION: What does a flourishing church look like? (Acts 2:41,47; 11:20-25; 14:21-28; 19:8-10; 5:14; 1 Thess. 1:8) It grows and reproduces itself! Let's make the assumption it's God's will that every believer have a recognizable ministry in the church that's measurable, and usually involves a team of people—1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:21,23; Acts 2:46; Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 10:25; Romans 16; Colossians 4:7,10-15; 1 Peter 5:12; Philippians 2:1-11, etc.

Where would we start? Scripture gives us 3 things no other book can give—I Thess. 2:1-12:
A. **The Message**—vv. 1-2; B. **The Motives**—vv. 3-6a; C. **The Methods**—vv. 6b-12

I. The Establishment of a Ministry or Church: A Case Study of the Ephesian Church.

Study: The formation—Acts 18:1-28; The founding—Acts 19:1-22; Paul's reflection on the founding—Acts 20:17-38; The Ephesian letter—Eph. 1-6; Paul's letters to Timothy, a pastor in Ephesus—1 & 2 Timothy; The church's need for revival/return—Rev. 2:1-7.

- A. **The Setting**—Acts 19:1-22. Here's the founding and building of the church (and also how ministries of any size are started). This foundation tells us why it was so strong.
1. The date—55 A.D., about six years before his letter in A.D. 61.
 2. The description in the grip of superstition, fear, demonism and witchcraft.
 3. The impact of godly ministry: A fascinating account of how the gospel can reach/affect an entire city and surrounding provinces, through a small band of people. Do we want to start something that will affect a lot of people for Christ? Here's an example of the message, the methods and the motives we will need.

B. The Preparation. How did this impact take place? (3 steps/elements) (See Acts 20.)

1. The formation and choosing of a ministering core (team).

a. Paul started forming the team with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth—Acts 18:1.

- Questions about small or quiet beginnings to ministry:
- Principle: We can touch the world from no matter where we are if we are in God's will, by our presence or our influence, e.g., influencing others to go.
- Note about Aquila and Priscilla: They were probably already believers.

- 1) **They had recently moved/were in transition**—v. 2. In transition, people are open to the gospel. In a cultural lull or upheaval, people are more open.
- 2) **They were visited by Paul**—v. 2b. He took initiative/sought out his core.
- 3) **They found some common ground in work together**—v. 3a. Finding work in the marketplace can be a good example, as well as a way to open up doors. What was the impact of Paul becoming a tentmaker? (Our work life?)
- 4) **They (Paul, Aquila and Priscilla) worked together for some time**—v. 3.
 - a) If we wanted to start a ministry with work mates, or those who are closest to us, would we have a good enough reputation to do so? How are our work habits? How is our disposition around work/others?)

b) **What would our ideal team look like?**

- **Sometimes we find people who have needs or hurts that initially need discipleship, healing, or maturity before they can become functioning members of the team**, e.g., Paul with Timothy.
- **The members of the team might also be mature, or maturing people**, e.g., Barnabas and Paul and Mark.
- **Other times they are what Jesus calls People of Peace**—Luke 10:6.
 - i. **A Person of Peace** may or may not be a follower of Jesus yet, but we begin to develop a relationship with them.
 - ii. **A Person of Peace** is often then, someone who: welcomes us; receives us (and therefore, probably unknowingly at first, receives Jesus in us); they serve us and/or serve along with us; we intentionally invest in them; they operate as a Gatekeeper, opening relational doorways into their networks of relationships.
 - iii. **A person of peace is a person of receptivity...a person who God has been working on before we even meet them**, e.g. Lydia, etc.
 - iv. **A Person of Peace is often a person of reputation** (good or bad). The demoniac is an example—Mark 5.
 - v. **A Person of Peace is a person of referral** (Acts 16:6-34). In other words, the person of peace is influential with a web of relationships where they invite you to influence, e.g., Philippian Jailer.
Example: Calvary Chapel in Seattle U District, my first church plant.

Notice also what Aquila and Priscilla did.

- 5) **They lived with Paul (close to him)**—v. 3b. (Hospitality, care is essential.)
- 6) **They were taught by Paul in the synagogue**—vv. 4-6. (He's their model.)
- 7) **They saw his manner of ministry** (prayer, discipleship, correction)—vv. 7-11.
- 8) **They saw how he responded to opposition**—vv. 6-7.
- 9) **They saw his follow-up of new converts and heard his teaching for a year and a half**—vv. 8,11. (It's modeling, discipleship and foundations of the faith.)

What happened next? This seems a little unusual.

- b. **He took them to Ephesus**—vv. 18-19. Why? We don't know. (His calling?)
- c. **He introduced the synagogues to Christ**—v. 19b. The training continues.
- d. **He then left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus**—v. 21.
 - 1) **Why?** Maybe so they would stand on their own; establish a beachhead.
 - 2) **What did Aquila/Priscilla do when they got there?** They lived like Paul had lived in Corinth, attended the synagogue, ministered to Apollos—vv. 24-26.
Encouragement: Don't be discouraged by the time it takes for discipleship. There's always a gap between sowing and reaping—2 Cor. 9:6-15.

Where was Paul?

- e. **He maintained his relationships with his sending church in Antioch & visited and strengthened other churches/ministries, leaders he had impacted.** (See Acts 19:21b-23.) He's not independent or unattached to those who sent him.

Where did he go from there? Acts 19:1.

- f. **He returned to Ephesus and added TWELVE more men to his first two disciples**—19:1-7. Watch how he prepares these twelve men and the Church.

Flourish

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The second part of the preparation of his ministry team included:

2. **The foundation of biblical concepts and doctrine**—19:1-7.
NOTE: Doctrine affects everything - worship, prayer, ministry, etc.

How did Paul lay the foundations in Ephesus?

- a. **He introduced water baptism and/or adjusted their view of baptism**—v. 3.
(Start with what they know. If it's accurate, affirm it. If it's not, correct it.)
- b. **He taught the lordship of Christ**—v. 4. (It's repentance, submission and faith.)
- c. **He baptized them**—v. 5. (He not only taught it, he baptized them).
- d. **He prayed that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit**—v. 6; Eph. 5:18-21.
- e. **He gave them some specific instruction, e.g., the kingdom of God**—v. 8.
(This is the message of God's rule - the now (but not yet) of the kingdom.)

Summary. The early Church's initiation into the faith usually involved 5 things:
1) Repentance from sin; 2) Faith in Christ; 3) Baptism in water; 4) Reception (baptism or filling) of the Holy Spirit; 5) Specific foundational instruction.

From that foundation we see the next step:

3. **The founding of a citywide ministry.** How does Paul broaden his audience?
 - a. **The location of the outreach: Synagogues.** He went where people were potentially receptive—v. 8. Find the Peace Child, redemptive bridges to an area.
 - b. **The result was opposition**—v. 9a. (There's always a power confrontation.)

How did Paul continue to train the disciples?

- c. **The training of the disciples**—vv. 9b-10a (beyond Initiation into the Faith).
 - 1) **Paul trained them by his example**—v. 8.
 - 2) **Paul trained them by specific teaching in the Hall of Tyrannus for two years.** During the siesta time from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It could have been as high as 3,121 hours of teaching over those two years.
 - 3) **Paul's training involved 5 E's of Discipleship/Ministry Development:**
 - a) Exposure—letting them see his (or others') ministry up close
 - b) Experience—giving them experiences in ministry
 - c) Evaluation—teaching them to reflect and learn from their experiences
 - d) Equipping—giving them instruction, Scripture to help them do ministry
 - e) Examination of the heart—developing character & motives for ministry

What was the result of the foundation Paul laid?

- d. **The outcome**—19:10-20:1. If we lay a good foundation, we will see:
 - 1) **Evangelism**—v. 10. The area Paul ministered in was larger than the State of California, but Paul didn't reach these cities himself; he taught and influenced those who carried the message, e.g., see churches in Revelation.
 - 2) **Miracles occurred**—v. 11.
 - 3) **Counterfeit religious experiences sprang up**—v. 13.

- 4) **Visibility of the power of Jesus was seen**—v. 17.
- 5) **Deliverance from Satan was apparent**—vv. 18-20.
- 6) **The gospel spread in influence and power.** v. 20—*“In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”*
- 7) **Great opposition continued**—vv. 23-41.
- 8) **Paul turned his ministry over to the disciples and departed**—20:1.

Conclusion: With those results in mind, think through the implications by observing the application questions that follow.

Going Deeper Application

- A. **What specific outreach, city, and ministry opportunity would you like to focus on?** Why would you pick this outreach? Is it an outreach that will challenge you and make you dependent on the Holy Spirit to carry it out?
- B. **What criteria will you use to choose a ministry team?** Do you have a group of people already around you that you might use as part of a team? Maybe you will begin with just two and add members later. What kind of members do you think you might need? Describe their gifts and level of maturity. Or, what team will you join?

NOTE: Don't overlook existing teams, groups, or relationships. If you are already in a small group, why couldn't you plan an outreach activity, a mission trip, or an outreach Bible Study?

- C. **What kind of training/modeling do you think you will need? Where will you get it?** Do you need to study, or be exposed to someone or a ministry that's already doing what you want to do? Who or what would that be? Also, evaluate what experience you already have. How will this impact your strategy?

NOTE: Inventory the training you have already received. Do you need to review some training from the past?

- D. **What will your strategy be as to how and where to get started?** Where will people be potentially receptive to your new ministry/outreach? Where will you establish common ground with those you want to reach? What need might you meet? What prayer support and backing do you think you might need? When will this happen? How can others pray for you regarding this potential mission?