

I. Prioritizing Fruit of the Spirit over Gifts of the Spirit

- A. This morning's session will be Part 1 of a mini-series on prayer ministry within the broader series of walking in the Practical of our Faith. This 4 part mini-series will serve as the baseline for ministry methodology and theology for our church family. Part 1 this morning will be heavily focused upon our heart posture when we are ministering to someone inside or outside the church family.
- B. Ministry Goals - As a young believer, I believed that successful prayer ministry was measured through the level of power the individual I was ministering to experienced. As an older believer who has seen incredible manifestations of God's power, I am convinced that true ministry success must be measured in whether or not the individual felt loved and cared for in the process.
 - 1. The Paramount Guideline - When it comes to prayer ministry here at Restoration, the love and care for individuals' hearts, comfort, and safety during the ministry process must supersede all other things. (Matt. 22:39)
 - 2. Seeing God's Precious Children - We must see every individual we are ministering to as precious to God. He uniquely fashioned and deeply loves the person you are going to pray for. He has wept over their brokenness and longs to see them in the fullness of life. He has been interceding day and night for them and endured unthinkable torture, brutal suffering, and death for the individual that you are praying for.

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.**” (1 Cor. 13:2)

II. Establishing a Loving Environment

- A. Prioritization of Love - When it comes to ministering to people, Jesus placed the priority upon loving the person greater than the priority of showing them God's power. His disciples clearly understood this, given that their epistles are replete with encouragement to prioritize growing and striving to love one another. In my opinion, when it comes to ministering to people, this truth is made the clearest in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 13:1-7)

1. This famous passage on love is not given in a marriage context or healthy relationships in general. It is a discourse on teaching or training people to minister spiritual gifts to one another, both in and outside of the church family. (1 Cor. 12-14)
 - a. Love is Patient - (Long Suffering)
 - b. Love is Kind - (Steady in Compassion)
 - c. Love does not Envy - (Content or Steady in Identity)
 - d. Love does not Boast - (Parade Power or Strength)
 - e. Love does not behave Rudely - (Cherishes Fragility)
 - f. Love is not Self Seeking - (Serves Extravagantly)
 - g. Love is not Provoked - (Joy Filled Hope)
 - h. Love thinks no Evil - (Merciful Tenderness)
 - i. Love does not Rejoice in Iniquity - (Abhors Evil)
 - j. Love rejoices in Righteousness - (Delights in Abundant Life)
 - k. Love Bears All Things - (Protect and Cover)
 - l. Love Believes All Things - (Believes or sees the Best)
 - m. Love Hopes All Things - (Confident in Future Goodness)
 - n. Love Endures All Things - (Remains Steady or Unshaken in Love)

III. Practical Preparation for Ministry

- A. Being Ready for Ministry - Entering into prayer ministry for an individual is the highest form of spiritual warfare we can engage in. We must understand that putting on the armor of God in its most practical and biblical sense is critical for ministry. (Eph 6:11-20)
 1. Stand Firm - Intentional Preparation for Ministry
 2. Belt of Truth - Sound in Doctrine
 3. Breastplate of Righteousness - Pursue Righteousness, Abhor Unrighteousness
 4. Feet Shod with Readiness - Eager Readiness to do Ministry
 5. Shield of Faith - Confidence in the Person of God
 6. Helmet of Salvation - Understand and Operate from the Gospel of Salvation
 7. Sword of the Spirit - Know the word of God

IV. General Practical Methodology for Ministry

A. Practicals of Ministering in Love and Care - Do prayer ministry in the context of relational connection (have a loving conversation with the person you are ministering to as if you were meeting them for coffee).

1. Consider hygiene.
2. Consider the setting.
3. Introduce yourself and ask them their name.
4. Ask questions such as: What's going on? How can I pray for you?
5. Ask if you can lay hands on them.
6. During ministry, check in with them and tell them what you're thinking and doing. Do not assume people know why you're doing what you're doing or what you are doing. So tell them. This is also an excellent way to train and equip others for ministry.

Example - "I want to ask Jesus to heal your back. Is that okay with you?"

Example - "I would just like to wait on the Lord for a second and ask him to show us anything He would like to concerning this situation.

7. REMEMBER, the person you are ministering to is in charge.
8. Be very intentional about never ministering to a person of the opposite sex in a one-on-one setting if it is at all possible.
9. Hugs are great but always ask if there is any question they might not be comfortable with it. Men and women should be a side hug.
10. Follow up if you see them again in church. "How are you doing? How are you feeling?"
11. Seek Feedback - Be eager for and seek out maturity, correction, reproof, encouragement, and affirmation from others concerning your ministry methodology.