

Doing the Work of an Evangelist

By Doug Hamilton

Review of Series

Paul charged Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5 to “*do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*” The responsibilities of a preacher are much greater than executing a lesson on a Sunday morning and possibly a Bible class. That is the least of his responsibilities. In review of such, we have covered three areas of the evangelist’s responsibility. They are Evangelism, Education and Encouragement. Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, leading others to the kingdom of God, small-group home Bible studies and personal Bible studies, hospital, prison, nursing home and shut-in visits are all considered to be the work of the practical evangelist. There is one other area for which we shall discuss.

4) Equipping

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

This passage is a very revealing text about the power of scripture. It encompasses all the phases of the scriptures to be brought to maturation. The word of God must be empowered in the hearts of men and women to become a practical reality. It is through teaching, through testing, through adjusting and discipleship that babes in Christ will be made complete. That is the word which Paul used for *equipped*, ἐξαρτίζω, meaning to complete, to finish. Being equipped is preparing the Christian to develop a practical, applicable and fruitful faith in God.

The accomplished lawyer, physician, musician, soldier and professor all pass through a similar path. All receive basic education, specialized training and internship for practicality. Their aim is to be the best attorney, the best doctor, the best entertainer, the best defender and best educator they can be. They must be able to take on the toughest trials, diseases, compositions, enemies and subjects which the world will throw at them. All of them have been trained to be able to take on the challenges for which they face.

The Christian is no different. We are facing a “*crooked and perverse generation*” (Philippians 2:15) and must be ready for whatever comes our way. We are expected to “*attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13). This process is what Paul referred to as *equipping*.

As a church, we must be willing to have a detailed plan to take each Christian to their maturation point of practicality. We can learn as much as we can about the Bible, but without application that knowledge will never become wisdom. It is in corporate ministries that a Christian enters an internship for the completion of their training.

According to Paul the evangelist plays a very important role in this. Timothy was a catalyst for many of the ministries which were developed in the church at Ephesus, for the charge was given to him from the apostle. A simple scan of 1 and 2 Timothy informs us that he was an equipper.

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- Prayer Ministry: *1 Timothy 2:1, First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.*
- Education Ministry: *1 Timothy 4:16, Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*
- Leadership Ministry: *1 Timothy 3:1, It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.*
- Financial Ministry: *1 Timothy 6:10, For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
- Prison Ministry: *2 Timothy 1:8, Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,*
- Widow's Ministry: *1 Timothy 5:3, Honor widows who are widows indeed*

Timothy had much more to do than preaching a sermon on Sunday morning and singing a few hymns. He was an evangelist and charged with equipping the members of the flock. We do not know exactly what his strategy was, but he was an equipper of the saints.

We do not know what the future holds for you concerning my replacement. Earlier it looked like a sure thing you as a congregation were going to have to be the corporate evangelist, but the elders are seeking your input now. I have not been shared the information you have been feeding the leadership over the past couple weeks. One thing for sure, you will be the corporate evangelist for at least the foreseeable future. On February 26th, you will become the corporate evangelist for the Camp Hill church of Christ. I would like to suggest a proven strategy for you to use.

A. Developing Meaningful Ministries

i. Car Ministry

More than a twelve years ago, I developed a car ministry to help the saints of Camp Hill. Our cars are the second most expensive item we will purchase. Often the cost to maintain this part of our life can break us if we are not careful, but it was more than saving funds.

- It equipped some with skills to serve them and others the rest of their lives.
- It equipped some to be wise stewards of their funds concerning their vehicles.
- It equipped some to be able to fund other works with their savings.
- It equipped some to reach out to their lost friends and relatives.
- It equipped some to fellowship outside the church building.

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ii. Golden Living Ministry

More than five years ago I began this ministry to better equip the members of Camp Hill church of Christ. At the time, their Spiritual Giftedness was strongest with the Spiritual Giftedness of Servant, Encouragers, Mercy Givers, Givers and Shepherds. A nursing home ministry would equip or further complete these Christians.

- Mercy Givers were equipped with the forgotten to further their faith.
- Encouragers were equipped with the depressed to grow their ministry.
- Servants were equipped with projects and ministry to improve the lives of the downtrodden.
- Shepherds were equipped with groups of other Christians to harmonize it all together.
- Givers were equipped the poor to redistribute the blessings

The Car Ministry became Golden and Golden Living became a vehicle for the equipping of the saints at Camp Hill. It has made them more complete in their service to God. Often it is the job of the evangelist to find ways to initiate ministries for the equipping of the saints. It might be a prison ministry, hospital visitation, small-group Bible studies or any number of other ministries must be put together to compliment the Body of Christ.

Position Open: Developers for Meaningful Ministries.

The Camp Hill church of Christ is seeking for men and women use their skills to develop meaningful ministries for the purpose of equipping the members. The candidates interested in these positions must possess an "out of the box" mentality to generate ideas and structure for the expansion of God's Kingdom. Please contact the elders to be empowered.

B. Empowerment in those same ministries.

There must be empowerment to the Christians of the congregation. Many people can come up with ideas, but involving others is another thing. It was always my goal to pull in as many people as possible. These ministries require coordination

- Emails, telephone and texts to make
- Schedules made
- Individuals Empowered
- Groups assembled
- Regular innovation and adjustment

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Position Open: Recruiters for Local Ministries

The Camp Hill church of Christ is seeking for men and women to be recruiters for the ministries of the church.

The individuals must work well with people, be self-motivated and willing to be a networker among others.

Sales and marketing experience would be helpful.

Interested parties must contact the elders.

C. Follow-through to complete their faith.

1 Timothy 6:12, *“Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”* Timothy we told to fight the good fight of faith. The ultimate end of the equipping process is a devoted, faithful, practicing Christian, willing to lay down his life for Jesus. This does not happen naturally, but must be grown in the heart of the Christian.

Christianity is a marathon, not a sprint. When seeking to equip souls for the kingdom of God, we must view them through the lens of a life-long commitment. In each stage of the Christians life, there needs to be further evaluation and follow-up.

- Younger converts can be further equipped with Bible Camps, Youth groups, retreats and ministry.
- College age converts can be further equipped by their peers at a Christian college, campus ministries, being mentored and involved in meaningful ministries.
- Young married couples and parents can be further equipped by more seasoned couples and parents.
- Those entering mid-life can be further equipped through mentoring others, advancing their studies and striving to be elders, deacons, elders and deacons wives, teachers and other leadership roles in the church.
- The aged can be further equipped by passing their knowledge to others, being active for the church in the retirement and being paternal and maternal spiritual agents for the church.

There must be long-term follow-up for all the people of God. Behind every mature Christian you can find others who were making life-long investments in others. On the other hand, behind every Christian who died along the side of the road of life likely had many others who did not properly follow through with continual equipping.

Over the past fifteen years I have done my best to follow-up with individuals. Tens of thousands of emails, texts and phone calls, thousands of personal visits,

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hundreds of studies, mentorships, preaching classes and dream sessions. This was all done with equipping in mind. With my departure on February 26th, there is a

Position Open: Shepherding Souls for Meaningful Ministries.

The Camp Hill church of Christ is seeking for men and women use their passion of shepherding to bring Christians of all levels to full maturation. You must be in it for the long-run and envision the big picture. Contact the elders to begin your service in this way.

major opening available.

Closing Story: The Vanishing Congregation

Many years ago there was a congregation in the Midwest who was going through something very similar to Camp Hill church. The membership was about 125 and three elders. Their long-time preacher was moving to another state. A few years prior they had expanded the building and carried some manageable debt. The congregation, being led by the elders, decided to do the work of an evangelist on a corporate level. Figuring on redirecting the saved funds toward paying off the debt, they decided to divide up the preaching responsibilities from among the men of the congregation. They had overlooked the many responsibilities of the *work of an evangelist* and the price they would pay was great. A basic summary of the first year:

- There were no small-group home Bible studies for further equipping of the saints.
- Many of the members who needed hospital and nursing home visits were not properly ministered to.
- There were no new corporate ministries formed and the ones which were there dwindled in participation.
- There was inconsistency in the lessons. Most of the sermons were topical in nature, not expository.
- The number of visitors had dropped partially because there was not a particular point of contact.
- Personal evangelism suffered the most. Usually the congregation had about 10-12 baptisms a year, but there was only one in the first year of the corporate evangelist method.

At the end of the first year, through deaths, lack of evangelism and discouragement, the congregational size diminished by 20%. They were able to pay off some of the debt, but the offering had also dropped by more than 20%.

At the end of the second year, there were few conversions and even fewer people. Some people were just discouraged and decided to go to a congregation in the town over. Sadly, because of lack of continual grounding, some found their way into denominationalism. A few more people died and some others moved for their employment. The average attendance and the offering was half of the number from two years prior.

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Ten years later I visited the congregation on my travels. They had about 40 members and no elders. Though they have no debt on the building, they also cannot afford a full-time worker either.

Closing Charge:

To my brothers and sisters of Camp Hill. You are being asked by your elders to give them feedback about what to do concerning my departure. They believe you can corporately do the work of an evangelist and at the same time pay off the debt incurred over the next few years. They also know that if you decide this route, they will be responsible to put it all together and monitor the progress. On the other hand, if you decide to hire an evangelist, make sure it is one who actually does the work of an evangelist, not just preach sermons.

This is why the elders are imploring for input. They need to hear where you stand and are willing to keep standing. If you have not already done so, sign the sheets on the back wall and let the elders know your thoughts. Tell them if you want a hired evangelist to alleviate some of your new responsibilities or tell them you don't want one.