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# Wanna be in Full-Time Ministry? Guess What?

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I had the honour of speaking at a luncheon for church staff and lay leaders as a precursor to a conference in Ontario, Canada.

In attendance at the luncheon was perhaps twenty or thirty Christian workers – some paid staff, most, I think, volunteers.

My first question to them was “How many of you are in full time ministry?” Not all the hands went up. Knowing most had misunderstood, I then challenged, “If you are a Christian here today, you are in full time ministry.”

Isn't that true? Life for the Christian is ministry. Ministry is service. Christians are called to serve: serve their friends, serve their family, serve their community, serve their church. In so doing, if our heart is right, we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:23-24)

So, if you are reading this and you are a

Christian, you are in full time ministry.

Here's seven facts you need to know about ministry. (These are all gleaned from Ezekiel 34 where the LORD has a message for those who were doing ministry irresponsibly.)

## **1. Ministry requires hearing from the Lord. (Ezekiel 34:1)**

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Ezekiel was a prophet. The Lord called him to speak to people. What was he to say? He had nothing to say until he had something to say. And that something must be from the Lord. As Christians, we need to be much with the Lord, abiding in His presence and in His Word. Only then will we have something profitable to share with others.

## **2. Ministry requires saying and hearing hard things. (Ezekiel 34:2)**

The message given to Ezekiel from God was not a “God loves you and everything is hunky dory” kind of message. It was a “woe” message!

Years ago I stood before a group of people at church and said something that was intended to be funny, but in the end, unbeknown to me, made some people feel bad. The next day, the senior pastor called me into his office and very gently but very firmly told me that what I had said did not represent his heart nor did it represent the heart of the Lord. I felt horrible and I apologized. I learned and grew from that experience.

I’m sure it was not easy for him to say, nor was it easy for me to hear. But it was necessary. It was ministry.

## **3. Ministry is not about you. (Ezekiel 34:2-3)**

Ezekiel was confronting shepherds who were more concerned about themselves than their flocks. They were getting rich and wearing the best clothes while their flock was weak and sick.

I sure am glad that doesn’t happen today in the church.

Some people have made working for a church an idol. They want to be (or are) part of a cool staff team at a cool church.

There’s nothing wrong with being on staff at a church. But we must all realize that we do ministry to serve others. We give more than we get. We sacrifice more than others. We love even when it hurts. This is the life of Jesus. This is the life of the Christian.

## **4. Ministry is all about people. (Ezekiel 34:4)**

Dear Christian, look around you. Do you see anyone weak? Anyone sick? Any in bondage to sin? Anyone broken? Any disillusioned? Any lost? Any abused? God’s heart is for us to be their shepherd: to strengthen, heal, bring back, seek out those who are weak, hurt, broken and lost.

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Pray and ask God to help you.

### **5. Ministry is serious business. (Ezekiel 34:5-10)**

God takes this seriously. He is impassioned for His creation. As Christians, we represent God. We represent God! Wow! Eternity is at stake. This is why James says that not many should presume to be teachers. (James 3:1)

A friend of mine once booked a flight for he and his wife from Florida to New York for the sole purpose of reaching out to a young lady whose heart was ripe for the gospel. He flew to New York to help her meet Jesus and find a church! He knew that people last forever. He understood the value of a human soul. Ministry is serious business.

### **6. Ministry is God's business. (Ezekiel 34:11-16)**

God is the true shepherd. Warren Wiersbe, in his great book, *On Being a Servant of God*, writes, "Ministry is when divine resources meet human need through loving channels for the glory of God." As Christians we are those loving channels of God's resources. We do not manufacture it, we distribute it. God is able to meet every need, bind up every broken heart. He will be faithful to do that through you and I.

### **7. Ministry leads to eternity. (Ezekiel 34:23-31)**

When we serve others, we are preparing them for eternity. Ezekiel 34 ends with a glorious description of the Millennial Kingdom. You will be there, if you are a Christian. The same can be said about the ones that you serve. Keeping this in mind helps us to serve with joy and perseverance.

Whatever your occupation, you are in ministry. You are serving. Do it for the glory of God. Love God. Represent Him to all those around you.

*Have you ever done a random act of ministry? Have you ever seen God show up in the ordinary and let You serve Him when you weren't expecting it? I don't want you to lose your reward, but if you feel led to share, I'd love to hear about it!*

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