



**WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL**  
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**Church Ministry Vs. Individual Ministry**

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**The Place of Christian Ministry**

Where is the Christian life practiced? Different people have different ideas.

Some think the proper place to practice their faith is primarily within the church. So, they become involved in the church's organization in various ways to demonstrate their faithfulness to God. They do this by:

- Attending worship
- Attending Bible study
- Attending prayer meeting
- Becoming a church officer - trustee, deacon, elder
- Teaching a Bible study class
- Teaching a discipleship class
- Working with the children or youth
- Working in the men's or women's ministry
- Serving on some committee
- etc.

Other people think the proper place to practice their faith in private. They do this by:

- Reading their Bible at home
- Praying at home
- Going out and "enjoying nature"
- etc.

Still other people think the proper place to practice their faith is in their private actions outside the church. They do this by:

- Giving donations to the homeless
- Working at a pregnancy center

- Advocating for immigrants
- Becoming politically active
- Witnessing on the street corner or in daily private encounters
- etc.

So which is right?

**What is Christian Ministry?**

Well, to answer that question, we need to take a step back and examine the very concept of ministry. Is ministry something that is done within the church community? Is it something done in the privacy of one's own life? Is it something done out in the community?

Truthfully, each of these possibilities may involve ministry, or they may not. The very concept of ministry is totally misunderstood by a lot of people.

One of the misunderstandings is actually supported by the first definition in the Oxford Dictionary. Here, ministry is defined as "the work or vocation of a minister of religion." It is not that this definition is completely wrong. Certainly the work of professional religious workers is called ministry. But it obviously does not fit with what is being dealt with above. Those expressions of ministry are not focused on professional church workers, but on everyday Christians.

Interestingly, Oxford Dictionary has a fourth definition for ministry. This one defines it as "the action of ministering to someone." In spite of the fact that this definition is given in the dictionary, there is something unusual about this one. It labels this definition as a "rare" usage of the word.

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### **Worldview Resources**

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

In actual fact, this may be a rare usage in the common vernacular, but it is far from uncommon in Christian thinking. For Christians, every believer is called on to minister Christ to the world. Every Christian is a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In spite of the fact that all believers are called to be ministers of the gospel in their world, relatively few actually carry out this biblical mandate.

There are several reasons why this is so. One is that many Christians don't see themselves as God's ministers in the world. They view Christian ministry as the domain of religious leaders. Another reason is that many simply don't want to do it. Some of these people live immoral lifestyles or have worldly, rather than biblical, life goals. A third reason is that some people have never been taught in church that this is their responsibility. A final reason is that, even if they realize they ought to, they have never been equipped to take their faith out into the world.

The first three reasons have to do with a lack of understanding and/or motivation to live out a biblical worldview. Solving this problem requires pastors and other church leaders to point those under their leadership in the right direction, and for believers in general to take personal responsibility for their own Christian walk.

The fourth reason can be remedied by individual Christians putting themselves in a position to be equipped to do ministry. This kind of equipping should be a priority of the church, but there are resources where individual Christians can get up to speed on their own.

### **The Equipping Process**

Becoming equipped to do ministry requires believers to acquire a proper knowledge base. This includes, in particular, equipping in

the area of worldview, essential biblical doctrine, evangelism, and apologetics. There are other areas of training that can be valuable, as well, but these four are the core.

### **Worldview**

A worldview is a person's understanding of how reality is structured. Any belief outside one's own personal worldview beliefs is considered fantasy. Since many people you interact with day in and day out have different worldview beliefs, you will constantly be coming across people you believe live in a fantasy world (and, by the way, they believe you live in a fantasy world).

To even be able to understand their beliefs, much less communicate faith concepts in terms they can understand, you are going to have to grasp worldview concepts.

### **Essential Biblical Doctrine**

Essential biblical doctrines represent the core essential beliefs revealed in the Bible. People cannot share what they do not know, so getting up to speed on the core beliefs of Christianity are the starting place for knowing one's own faith, as well as for having the ability to share it with someone else.

### **Evangelism**

We are commanded by Christ Himself to share our faith. But doing it requires that we understand the essential worldview beliefs of our Christian faith. In fact, the essential worldview beliefs revealed in the Bible are the very essence of God's plan of salvation. To explain our faith, we must share with people what the Bible teaches about God, man, and salvation, then offer them the opportunity to receive it.

### **Apologetics**

Christian apologetics is a defense or explanation of the Christian faith that we share with people who oppose the faith, or have yet to form an opinion about it. It is traditionally practiced from a defensive standpoint as we

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answer the questions or objections of non-believers.

However, those who are outside of the faith are approaching us from their own worldview beliefs, and it is quite legitimate to make them answer for their own faith before feeling a requirement to defend our beliefs. Understanding worldview concepts gives believers the ability to question beliefs that oppose biblical teachings.

## So, Which Is It?

So, we now need to go back to the original question: Where is the proper place to practice Christian ministry? Is it a church practice or an individual practice?

Well, hopefully you are getting the idea that it is not one or the other, but that it is both. They are two sides of the same coin.

As believers, we are members of the body of Christ. As such, we are to participate in the body by expressing ministry to and among our fellow believers. We are to serve them in ways that help strengthen their faith and encourage their Christian walk.

But we are also commissioned by God to take our faith out into the world in order to bring those who are separated from God into the fellowship of believers. Christ has made us to be His hands and feet in the world to accomplish His purpose.

If you are not doing both, you are not completely doing God's will through your life. Every believer in Christ is a minister of the gospel. Just because a person is not serving vocationally in Christian ministry does not mean they are not serving in ministry. Every believer is a minister.

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