

I Have A Dream - Serving

REVIEW: For the entire series we have been talking about changing the culture of our church to be in line with the vision for where we need to head as a local church. We began talking about membership - what it is, what it is not, but most of all why it really is a much bigger deal than most of us give it credit for. What we really wanted to do is raise our understanding of what membership is because when we have a better, and correct understanding of membership, the other areas of the Christian life fall in place. We also talked about schedules, and how we can glorify God with our time. Which led us to the bulk of what we have looked at - ways to best use our time for God. We are setting the course for beginning Life Groups for our church - with the vision to see each person in a Life Group. That falls under the area of having a place outside of the Sunday service to be built into. Last week looked at the area of service. What our vision is that every person has one regular means of giving out, or serving.

INTRO: So this morning I want to get really practical about serving, and the opportunities we will have to be serving in our church.

I. Some ground rules in understanding service

A. First, what I have in mind for serving the Lord is service for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in Christ

1. By no means is that to say that we should not serve our fellow man
2. Our faith never takes us off the clock - so we serve whomever we are around - that is just part of our DNA as Christians
3. In fact, that is a great means of evangelism - serving others out of your heart to serve God
4. But the service I have in mind is using your spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities to serve the church (your church family)
 - a) That is in fact why they were given in the first place
 - b) To build up the Body of Christ

B. Second, what do I mean when I say “regular?”

1. Regular means regular
 - a) Please, no semantical games
 - b) We understand what regular means
2. If you usher once a year, while that is regular, that is not what we are talking about
3. We are talking about having a ministry to your church family that you can call your own
 - a) We know that some people are support staff
 - (1) They like to work behind the scenes

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- (2) They like to set things up, or take things down, or organize information and material
- (3) What they are not wired for is being the leader, or the teacher - and that is perfectly fine because that is how God wired you
- b) Then there are others that have gifts to be the leader or the teacher
 - (1) I am convinced that we have more of them in our church than some might think
 - (2) I think we have some people, that with a little encouragement, and a little training would do well at leading or teaching, or any other “out front” type of ministry
- 4. So when we talk of regular ministry, it might not mean every single week, but should be greater than once a month or once a year
 - a) This is an area that is difficult to quantify
 - b) It would be easy to cross the line from encouraging genuine commitment to serving Christ by serving His Body, into legalism that forces you into roles or methods that are not clearly laid out in Scripture
- C. One other ground rule that we laid for this conversation about serving
 - 1. We made conscious choices about what areas we thought were vital to keep up and running, or to strengthen, or to get started
 - 2. When we first started dreaming, we named all kinds of ministries that we would love to see happen
 - a) Different children’s ministries, counseling ministries, handicapped ministries
 - b) When we took a careful look, we understood that we are a small church right now, and we cannot have a big church mentality
 - (1) Instead of focusing on having lots of ministries that struggle to succeed
 - (2) It is far better to have fewer ministries that are focused and strong
 - 3. So choices were made about which ministries would remain our focal points for this church
 - a) That does not mean that other ministries or ministry types are bad
 - b) That also does not mean that we would not consider other ministries if someone felt that God was leading them toward ministering in a particular fashion
 - (1) Having said that, the leadership will work to maintain a unified vision for the church
 - (2) In the past we have all aimed at the same goal, being more like Jesus, but have all tried our own paths to get there - the ministries need to be unified in their approach

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II. Areas of service for our church

A. In no particular order - the first area of ministry is the sound board

1. Over the last several weeks we have been working on getting the bugs out of the system with a professional company
2. This same company is willing to train those interested in learning the sound system
 - a) And in this case, when we say train, you will know what every button, and every knob does on the board
 - b) You will know the whats and the whys of the sound system so it will not be a guessing game
3. If you are a techie and like buttons and knobs and things this is an area of ministry for you

B. A second area of ministry is ushering

1. We have been working on exactly what this position would look like, and have expanded its role
 - a) In fact we had considered coming up with a new name for the position because it incorporates ushering, greeting, and security
 - b) One person suggested UGS, or GUSs - we stuck with usher
2. The leadership has been working on a job description for the position so people know exactly what is expected of them
 - a) The basics: Greet people as they come in and hand out bulletins
 - b) Take up the offering
 - c) Walk through the building a few times during the service to make sure the children's ministries in Taylor Chapel and the nursery are in good shape
3. They have even made plans for a brief training session to make sure that anyone filling the role of usher knows where to find things, knows what is expected, and knows how to deal with some less likely problems
4. This is one ministry that helps the friendliness quotient, but also is a big help to the people doing nursery ministry, and Children's Church
5. This a little behind the scenes, but still allows you to work with people - it is a vital support ministry

C. The third area of ministry is our worship ministry

1. Ideally, we would love to find more people that play instruments or sing to help with worship Sunday morning
2. We have two people that have been dedicated to planning out the worship readings and songs that we sing on Sunday mornings
3. But those folks need help and support
 - a) While they can sing without you

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- b) It always sounds better when the band is full, when there are multiple singers
- 4. This is an area of ministry that requires specific skills
- 5. So if you are musically gifted
 - a) In either playing an instrument or singing
 - b) This may be the place for you
- 6. And by the way, if you have noticed we have been getting some younger talent in the mix
 - a) In some cases really young talent
 - b) And that is AWESOME!
 - c) There is no reason that the teenagers, or even the grade school students cannot sing with our worship teams
 - d) They can have skills, talents, and passions for ministry and we should be encouraging them to explore how they can serve here at the church too
 - e) In fact, students do many things for their schools - there is no reason they could not or should not have a ministry in the church
- D. The fourth area of ministry that we look to improve is the children's ministry
 - 1. In the children's ministry we have a few different areas
 - a) The nursery
 - b) Children's church
 - c) AWANA
 - 2. One of the ways we want to help bring support for those working with the children is to offer some training
 - a) After having been here for quite a while, I believe that some people feel as if they are not equipped to engage in ministry - even with the children
 - b) What we want to see happen is people feeling as if they understand how to teach little minds
 - (1) That means we want to elevate nursery ministry so that the workers feel as if they understand how to teach even the littlest of our church
 - (2) It means we want people to feel as if they have a good handle on how to teach Children's Church
 - (a) We want them to now how to handle the kids questions
 - (b) Know how to handle issues that might come up
 - (c) Know who they can turn to if an emergency should arise
 - (d) We also want to make sure that we support the children's church ministry by making you aware of something you may not know

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- i) Each week, as I understand it, there is a sheet for parents that is suppose to go home with the kids
 - ii) It has questions for you, the parents and the kids primary disciplers, to go over with the kids so you can reinforce the lesson with your kids
 - (3) We want people to feel confident to be engaged in ministry with the AWANA kids
 - (a) That is a treasure-trove of young hearts that need to hear the gospel
 - (b) That is one area that is both inreach to the Body and outreach to the community
 - (c) There is so much potential there and we want to put serious effort into supporting and expanding that ministry
 - 3. Are there other forms of children's ministry in the church - sure
 - a) VBS would be one we never mentioned
 - (1) Currently that one is going strong
 - (2) However we can always use support
 - (a) I would rather turn people away from ministry
 - (b) Than have to beg for helpers
 - 4. Are there other ways we can minister to children
 - a) Certainly!
 - b) But this is one of those areas that we made a conscience choice not to add more than what we have, but to seek ways to improve what we have
- E. The fifth area of service would be the Youth Ministry
- 1. This has been my domain for years, and I love my kids
 - 2. I have had some wonderful parents that help as best they
 - 3. I will tell you that the Youth Group is Awesome!
 - a) Over the last year or two I have wondered how they became so cool
 - b) What did I do that made them so awesome!
 - c) The answer is - nothing
 - (1) God has been the One at work in them
 - (2) Yes, He has taken the efforts of those that work with the group and used them for His glory, but the glory is all God's
 - 4. What is needed most with the students are some people that love teenagers
 - a) That means you love their teenagerness
 - b) You overlook the craziness, see past it and see the wonderful people they are
 - 5. We need just a couple of adults that are committed to getting to know the teens and build relationships with them one on one

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- a) I can only work with so many of them at a time
 - b) That is why we can use one or two men, and one or two ladies that want to invest in their lives
- F. A sixth area of ministry would be a projects coordinator for Community Sundays
- 1. Here is what we are looking for: 1-3 people that are friendly, and would be willing to look around the community for personal projects
 - a) So if you found a home that looked like it could use a paint job, or some new steps, or work on a deck
 - b) You would knock on the door, explain what you are doing, and offer help from the church
 - (1) You will get objections about payment
 - (2) Or what strings are attached
 - (3) That is when you get the pleasure of saying, "There are no strings attached. We believe that God did so much for us in sending Jesus so we could have eternal life in heaven, that we simply want to get into the community and be a blessing for others."
 - 2. Skills needed for this job would be friendliness, a little time, and organizational skills
- G. The last area of ministry, which affects the whole church is Life Groups
- 1. This is what we talked about a few weeks ago
 - a) This is a way in which we can meet outside from the Sunday morning time with a smaller group of our church family
 - b) This time is designed to be more intimate, to foster not only conversation, but sharing of lives
 - c) It is the time where we are able to work out repentance by sharing how God is moving and working in our hearts from the Sunday morning time that is designed for truth and conviction
 - 2. We plan to train the leaders of the groups
 - a) What we found last time we attempted to get groups going is that we had many people that signed up to be in a group - which is great
 - (1) That shows us that there is a need there
 - (2) It shows us the desire people have to learn and grow
 - b) The problem was we had no one that wanted to lead a group
 - (1) Which either means there is a problem with burn out due in part to the position
 - (2) Or, we have people that feel they are not qualified to lead a group
 - c) The burn out problem can be addressed in how the groups are designed to run
 - d) The qualification part can be helped by training leaders for the groups

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3. We have chosen group leaders to get the ministry up and running
 - a) Where you come in is thinking ahead
 - (1)Perhaps God might be calling you toward this type of ministry
 - (2)Great! We will also be looking for leaders to be trained for when the ministry grows
 - b)A person who leads a group should be a person that is authentic
 - (1)They do not hide who they are
 - (2)They are able to be open about their sins and shortcomings
 - c) They need to be a believer acquainted with their Bible
 - (1)Notice I did not say well acquainted
 - (2)You do not need to be a Bible expert, or have an answer for every question
 - (3)What you need is a reliance on the Holy Spirit
 - d)If you are interested in checking out more of what would be involved in training for being a Life Group leader, please come talk with me
4. Something related to this area would be to find a person or two that would function as Life Group coordinator/coaches
 - a) These folks would need strong organizational skills as well as good people skills
 - b) They would need to be a solid follower of Christ

III. Other parts related to serving

- A. "Wait, Pastor, you did not mention my ministry. Does that mean it is not important?"
 1. Of course not!
 2. Every ministry is important
 - a) Just because I did not mention hospitality or coffee hour does not make them unimportant
 3. As we looked over the various parts of our church, we saw some ministries that needed strengthening that we wanted to make sure we highlighted
 4. In fact, this kind of leads me to another point
- B. Can you be involved in more than one ministry?
 1. Certainly!
 2. For example: if you are involved in leading a life group, or work in AWANA on Wednesday nights, can you also host a coffee hour once or twice a year - of course
 - a) In fact, I recommend it for Life Groups
 3. There are some ministries of the church that are not regular ministries
 - a) Each year we come together to clean out the flowerbeds and re-mulch

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- b) When we painted the church house, that was a summer long project, but it is not a regular thing - unless you define regular as once every 20 years
 - c) But as time permits, all of us can make ourselves available to using our gifts and skills for our brothers and sisters in Christ
 - d) Another example would be the people that got together to help build a ramp for Alice
 - (1) We are not in the ramp building business and this is far from a regular means of ministry
 - (2) But good folks got together with their talents and skills to help a sista out
- C. I hope we are setting a good picture here
- 1. We all need a regular means of giving out for our faith
 - 2. In that process we also wind up growing in our faith
 - 3. When we cut ourselves off from regularly serving our church family
 - a) We become weaker
 - (1) We take in a lot of knowledge and “theory”, but never have any practice
 - (2) We fill ourselves with lots to think on, but our faith weakens because we do not flex those faith muscles in tangible ways
 - b) The family becomes weaker
 - (1) When we do not share our gifts and talents with others, the whole Body suffers
 - (2) Our spiritual gifts were given to us for the betterment of the Body of Christ
 - (a) When we keep them to ourselves, we are effectively robbing our family of the strength we should be giving them
- D. The series is titled, “I Have A Dream”
- 1. The statistic that has been used for years is that in the typical church, 20% of the people do 80% of the work
 - a) And some have pushed that as high as 10% do 90% of the work
 - 2. I have a dream that this church will defy the statistics
 - a) That 100% of the work is being done by 100% of the people
 - b) Am I crazy to dream that big?
 - (1) Maybe
 - (2) But I know how big our God is, and God can make anything happen