

Help! I'm Called to the Ministry!

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"What should I do Pastor Dan? I am feeling a call from God to the ministry. There is a tug on my heart. I'm sensing the witness of the Holy Spirit that He is separating me to preach the gospel." Well, I'm glad you asked! I've got the answer to your wonderful problem. The answer is this: A CALL TO THE MINISTRY IS A CALL TO "P.R.E.P.A.R.E." You Must:

P.ray daily.

R.ead your Bible daily.

E.vangelize everywhere.

P.ursue your calling.

A.pprentice under spiritual authority.

R.eceive Bible training.

E.xercise your spiritual gifts.

Pray Daily

Your calling and ministry can only be birthed by basking yourself in disciplined prayer and seasons of fasting. Don't rush. Just saturate yourself in prayer and intercession everyday with the determination that you will never veer away from a lifestyle of prayer. I recommend Dr. Larry Lea's videos, cassettes, and teaching manual on "Could You Not Pray One Hour" and all of Dr. Kenneth Hagin's books on prayer to help you lay this precious fundamental foundation of prayer in your life. PRAY THE PRICE to be used of God. Develop the prayer habit!

Read Your Bible Daily

Sufficient to quote two scriptures: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4)

"Preach the WORD." (II Tim 4:2)

Learn the art of scripture study, scripture memorization, scripture meditation, and scripture confession before God in prayer.

Evangelize Everywhere

God is not going to trust you in a pulpit somewhere until He sees that you are faithful one-on-one and that you make witnessing a lifestyle. Before you are a preacher or pastor, you are first and foremost are "a witness" (Acts 1:8). Preachers who have tried to shortcut grass roots BOOT CAMP don't "cut the mustard" later on. Get some tracts and "go for it." You don't need a license to preach. There are captive audiences in jails, prisons, detention centers, youth prisons, nursing homes, housing projects, orphanages, children's hospitals, V.A. hospitals and scores of other places. God has already commanded you to go into the highways and hedges and "compel them to come in." Out where the needs and sinners are is where the ACTION is; there's not near as much action inside the four church walls and behind a pulpit! "Go!", Jesus said.

Pursue Your Calling

After being called into the ministry, you most likely will have to continue in secular employment for an extended period of time. But all the while you can be RED HOT FOR GOD, BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL OF PRAYER AND WEARING OUT YOUR BIBLE! At the beginning of a ministry it is mostly sacrifice as

you learn to "ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST." Let nothing or no one dash your dream and goal of ministry. It will develop! It will come to pass! You have heard from God! Hang in there!

The devil lied to Joseph the Dreamer about his dreams and he has lied to you. Put your foot on his scrawny neck and refuse to take "No" for an answer to your goal. Don't be shaken. It takes time for God to develop your gift to the place where the gift will feed you and make your living.

Apprentice Under Spiritual Authority

This is of utmost importance. Too many ministries have been ABORTED because of failure to apprentice under spiritual authority. Apprenticeship is the thread of great ministries throughout the Bible: Joshua under Moses, Elisha under Elijah, the Twelve under Jesus, Timothy under Paul, Philip the evangelist under Peter, and many others. Jesus said: "and if ye have not been faithful in that which is ANOTHER MAN'S, who shall give you that which is YOUR OWN?" (Luke 16:12) You need to hook up with a supernatural pastor and let him nurture you in the Lord. You need to serve him like Elisha did, pouring water on Elijah's hands for over ten years. You need to do anything he asks you. Like a sponge, you need to soak up his anointing, his teaching and preaching, and his experience. You must learn to be loyal to him even when you see some of his weaknesses and mistakes. You must humble yourself to FOLLOW before you can LEAD. Gradually, as God proves you faithful (I Cor 4:2), he will promote you. Don't get into the flesh by "jumping the gun." God "makes everything beautiful in its time." (Eccl 3:11) Don't get the "cart before the horse" by hastily incorporating your own non-profit tax deductible ministry. You will surely be disillusioned later by your hastiness (Isaiah 52:12) If you feel God is calling you to the pastorate, don't advertise it. If you feel God is calling you to be a prophet or an apostle, for your sake, DON'T ADVERTISE IT. Let it develop. "The proof of the puddin' is in the eatin'." If you advertise before God establishes you in the sight of people, it may appear to the people that you are one "who boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." (Prov 25:14). Don't try to make room for your gift. Instead, let God's gift gradually make room for you (Prov. 1:16). Philip the evangelist started out as a table waiter for widows and didn't advertise his call to be a miracle evangelist. But God saw his faithfulness and promoted him. Even though David was anointed by God as a young man to be King, he didn't advertise. David didn't manipulate for recognition. He didn't push. He waited until the people anointed him, or in other words, until God validated and anointed him in the sight of the people. This took years. Promotion comes from the Lord (Psalm 75:6-7). Whatever you do, don't compete with your pastor and develop a spirit of disloyalty. Support his decisions. Defend him to critics. You're sowing good seed for your own future harvest. If you will apprentice under God-ordained spiritual authority, God will later LAUNCH YOU OUT INTO THE DEEP FOR A BIG CATCH.

Receive Bible Training

This is a must! Devour anointed teaching tapes. Attend a Spirit-filled Bible college as God leads. Tell your supernatural pastor you want him to take you under his wings. Devour teaching and preaching books by anointed authors whose ministries you aspire to be like.

Exercise Your Spiritual Gifts

The Bible teaches in Eccl 9:10; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." As God opens doors for you to serve, walk through them! If the only opportunity before you is to clean the church toilets or share Jesus in a nursing home, DO IT WITH ZEST AND ZEAL as if you were preaching to a crowd of a million. GOD WILL SEE! GOD WILL SEE! Exercise those spiritual muscles and gifts and surely you shall see your ministry blossom and come into demand.

CONCLUSION: Get used to "preparing". It must become a way of life. For the rest of your life, while in your present phase of ministry, God will simultaneously be preparing you for the next phase of your ministry.