

Michael's Message

What do we mean when we say that God calls people into ministry? Many think that God only calls people to be preachers and that everyone else is supposed to believe in Jesus Christ, go to church, and try to be good people. In the Presbyterian Church, also known as the Reformed tradition, we believe that God calls everyone into their respective careers or jobs. We believe that people are also called to be husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers. In fact, every person is called into life by God to witness to God in every area of one's life – whether it is in the family, the school, the business, the farm, or any other place where a person might find him or herself.

When we think of our entire life as ministry and all of life and every person as called by God, it changes everything. We can no longer think of pastors as professional Christians since everyone is called to be a Christian. The idea that lay people are somehow exempt from the requirement to live as disciples of Christ must be rejected, since they have been called into ministry as well.

In the governance of the church, we must recognize that pastors are not the employees of churches but are partners in ministry with the members of the church. Pastors and session are partners in leading the churches that they serve and lead under the direction of Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church. So, both elders and pastors are the employees of Jesus Christ.

Our society does not operate this way. Doctors are experts in medical care, and we are supposed to follow their advice. Lawyers are legal experts and we keep out of trouble when we do what they tell us to do. In every area of job except the church, there are clear lines of authority with bosses over workers.

Jesus tells us that it will not be so among us as the greatest of us all must be the servant of all. Paul tells us to be slaves of one another. The church is distinctly different.

I want you to think about how these ideas might change the ways that you do things. How will you treat other people differently when you realize that each relationship represents God's call into relationship? How will you treat each task when you realize that God called you to do that task?

As difficult as this may seem, we must recognize that Jesus Christ gives us the strength we need, fills us with joy, and provides us with his companionship. I pray for your continued growth as disciples of Christ as God continues to bless us with grace and peace.

Michael

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