

Equipping for Ministry: How to Turn your Young People from Passive Consumers to Passionate Servants

What if you could multiply your efforts ten or twenty times? What if your youth ministry team was more than just you and your best friend, but included a passionate group of young people who were actively sharing their faith and shepherding their peers? Equipping young people for ministry will get them out of the stands and on to the field, but it requires something more than just another Bible study. Find out how you can unleash the ministry potential in your young people.

Paul Bowman has 20 years of experience in full-time youth ministry in the local church. He has served in a variety of settings throughout Ireland – both urban and rural – working with churched and unchurched young people. He is passionate about developing youth ministries that are rooted in the life of Christ, making disciples, and focusing on development of the whole person. He has been leading teams of young people on short-term mission trips to the Czech Republic for 15 years. He is committed to training and equipping the next generation of youth leaders. He lives with his wife Val and their three children in Saintfield, Northern Ireland. He holds a BSc Hons in Community Youth Work.

- I. Why equip young people to share in the work of ministry?
 - a. The example of Moses
 - b. The example of Jesus

 - c. Equipping: an essential part of the development of any disciple of Christ
 - d. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:12 that part of our job as leaders is... “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.”
 - e. When Jesus called his disciples to follow him it was not a call to speak, or perform great acts of faith – But it was **following** Jesus that led to those actions. (John 1:43)
 - f. Equipping for ministry starts with an emphasis on following well
 - g. After a year and a half of personal ministry, Jesus called out a ministry team.
 - h. He trained them in the knowledge, skills, relationships and attitudes necessary to impact others by imparting his life to them. (1 Thess 2:8)

- II. Identify the ready: Those who will influence by example – not by position or authority. Servants who have a desire to be involved in Peer Care & Peer Evangelism. These young people are AFT’R more – Luke 5:1-11

Available / Faithful / Teachable / Responsive

III. Purpose of equipping: to become a Fisher of Man - Matt 4:19

- a. Why have they become passive consumers?
- b. Were they challenged to their calling?

IV. The Emphasis of Christ's Equipping:

- a. Practical training – After the challenge to a deeper level of involvement they experienced a hands on ministry experience – Luke 5:1-11
- b. Engage in Outreach

V. Equipping for ministry is a development of:

- a. Character / heart
- b. Skills
- c. Knowledge

VI. The development must take place in a determined context, which includes:

- a. Circumstances
 - i. Natural
 1. Closely related to the calling - **Fishers** of Men
Only calling which is put into practice can become a passion. Not practicing a calling turns to religion or frustration and doubt.
 2. Rooted in everyday life - Fishers **of Men**
(i.e. weddings, celebrations, traveling, funerals, feasts, sickness)
 - i. Challenges and God's power:
 1. Challenges regarding your priorities: Luke 14:33
 2. Your skills: Luke 9:2

3. Your faith: Matt 17:20-21
 4. Your paradigms: John 13,1-14
 5. Allows you to experience God's power: Mar 8,19-20
- ii. Adversity and God's protection:
1. Adversity is inevitable: John 15:18-20
 2. Can include: 2 Cor 11:23-30
 - a. Persecution from people
 - b. The natural adversities related to travel
 - c. Deficiencies
 - d. Spiritual warfare
 3. Adversity allows you to experience God's protection: 2 Ti 3:10-12
- b. Environment:
- i. Dynamic - new places, new people, new cultures: John 4,1-54
 - ii. With an example to follow: John 13,1-14
 - iii. Confrontational: Mark 8,31-33
 - iv. Sustainable: John 6:1-24
- c. Time
- i Length: Acts 18:5-11
 - ii. Frequency / intentionality: Mark 9:2-10

Questions:

How can you share the message of following well with your young people?

Do you think we place too much emphasis on leadership in our youth groups?

Do you have a plan for surfacing passionate servants in your ministry? How will you see that they are equipped to share in the work of the ministry?

What are some potential problems of investing more time in a few?

Why is investing in a few to equip them to reach the many so difficult?