



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **12th Grade | Unit 2**

BIBLE 1202

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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Author:

George Till, Th.M., D.M.

Editor:

Alan Christopherson, M.S.

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Christian Ministries

Introduction

Career guidance begins with self-understanding, but the next step is equally essential: knowing the job market. Then you can intelligently match yourself with a suitable career.

Information about secular occupations is more readily available than information about ministries. The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) has been developed under the sponsorship of the United States Department of Labor. The O*NET database lists over 900 occupations and includes the skills, abilities, knowledge, tasks, work activities, work context, experience levels required, job interests, work values/needs, and work styles of those occupations. Of all these occupations, only a few are related to religion, theology, and churches. The emphasis of this LIFEPAC® is upon the variety of Christian ministry.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAC, you should be able to:

1. Explain what a Christian ministry is.
2. Describe the various kinds of Christian ministries.
3. Compare a Christian ministry to a career.

1. DEFINING MINISTRY

A lively discussion occupied Mr. Newman's classroom. "What is a Christian ministry?" he asked. Craig volunteered an answer, "Something you do for God." Immediately Edith replied, "But ministry also is helping people." "Isn't it what you do in church?" asked Helen. Jordan thought aloud about pastors and missionaries being ministers. "But anyone who uses the Bible is ministering," added Dan. "Any spiritual work," concluded Ruth, "is ministering."

Which answers from the class do you think were correct? A survey of Christian ministries reveals that they encompass all of these and more. Christian ministries are performed in a multitude of ways both in the Bible and in Christendom.

This section examines the varieties of ministries in the New Testament and interprets the meaning of ministry for Christians today.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Name and define two classifications of New Testament ministries.
2. Give the New Testament meaning of the word ministry.
3. Define ministry as viewed in Christendom today.
4. Correct five misconceptions related to persons in and functions of ministries.

BIBLICAL VARIETIES


In the Greek language (the original language of the New Testament), the main word for minister or servant is *deacon* (1 Timothy 3:13). A different word, however, is used for slaves (bond servants). Thus, *ministry* in the New Testament means *voluntary service for other persons*.

First Corinthians 12:5 declares, "And there are differences of administrations [varieties of ministries] ..." Accordingly, many different kinds of ministries are performed in the New Testament. They may be classified as either general services or special ministries.

General Services. In the New Testament, general services appear in the form of *assistance* rendered mainly for the benefit of fellow believers, performed by serving meals, supplying money or goods, and caring for physical needs. Examples of these three kinds of services are given:

Serving meals. Martha, the sister of Mary, is remembered for receiving a rebuke by Jesus (Luke 10:38–42); but in John 12:2 she served Jesus a meal again, but without rebuke.

Money or goods. The church in Antioch ministered to the material needs of its mother church (Acts

 **Read Romans 15:8, 15–16, 25–27, 30–31; 16:1–6 and 12.**



From the preceding verses, list in your career notebook the names of those who minister or serve in any way, and then describe how (Assignment 10).

11:27–30). When a prophet foretold a famine in Jerusalem, they decided to send the church in Jerusalem *relief*. The word, translated *relief* (verse 29), is the main word used for ministry in the Greek New Testament.

Caring for physical needs. While Paul was in a Roman prison, Christians stayed by his side to render him personal aid. One of these Christians was a runaway slave named Onesimus. Paul had led him to faith in Christ and then sent him back to his Christian master, Philemon. Paul wrote that he wished he could keep Onesimus to be his own servant (Philemon 13).

Special Ministries. Special ministries in the New Testament are duties performed primarily to propagate the Gospel and maintain the unity of the Church. Jesus said (John 12:26), "If any man serve me, let him follow me ..." Although every spiritual gift equips for ministry, one gift itself is actually named *ministry* (Romans 12:7). Generally, special ministries appear in the New Testament in association with certain individuals and groups:

1. Individuals who perform special ministries in the New Testament include both men and women, the prominent and obscure.
2. Groups or classes of people who perform special ministries in the New Testament include both leaders and lay members of the church. The New Testament cites the ministries of the Old Testament priests (Hebrews 10:11) and prophets (1 Peter 1:12). The most prominent ministries in the New Testament were those of the apostles (Acts 1:25). Deacons by definition are ministers (1 Timothy 3:13). The ministry of the church is also performed by all of the saints (Ephesians 4:12).



| Performing a special ministry

This overview of *ministry* in the New Testament forms our foundation for understanding what ministry is.

Complete these activities.

- 1.1 Read the following Bible verses and list the names of individuals in them who performed ministries:
 - a. Acts 12:25 (2 people) _____
 - b. Romans 15:8; 16:1 (2 people) _____
 - c. 1 Corinthians 3:5 (2 people) _____
 - d. Colossians 1:7; 4:7; and 4:17 (3 people) _____
 - e. 1 Thessalonians 3:2 (1 person) _____
- 1.2 The New Testament cites the ministries of the Old Testament as a. _____ and b. _____
- 1.3 The most prominent ministries in the New Testament were those of the _____.
- 1.4 By definition, deacons are _____.
- 1.5 The ministry of the church includes _____ saints.

Match these items.

- 1.6 _____ general service
- 1.7 _____ prepared a meal for Jesus
- 1.8 _____ ministered to the material needs of the church in Jerusalem
- 1.9 _____ rendered Paul personal aid
- 1.10 _____ special ministry

- a. the church in Antioch
- b. assistance to fellow believers
- c. Philemon
- d. propagate the Gospel
- e. Martha
- f. Onesimus

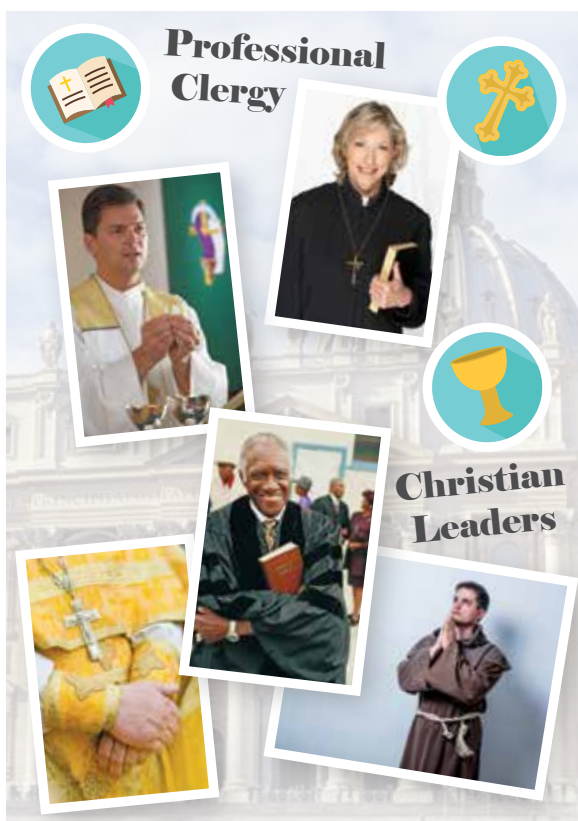
THE TWO MODERN MEANINGS

Ministry in the New Testament is synonymous with service. It performs general services for other people and it performs special ministries to maintain the unity of the church. As viewed in Christendom today, the word ministry conveys two distinct meanings, a *restrictive meaning* and an *inclusive meaning*.

Restrictive. The restrictive meaning of ministry identifies it purely as the Gospel ministry, under

those such as pastors and missionaries. Ministry is frequently limited to this meaning.

Inclusive. The inclusive meaning of ministry includes the voluntary ministries performed by all Christians. Ministry in this sense corresponds more closely to the Biblical use of the word as it is used for a wide variety of Christian services. The following segments correct five misconceptions that arise from limiting the definition of a ministry.



1. Ministries are performed not only by the leaders of churches and Christian organizations but also by Christian followers. All the redeemed have a responsibility to the Lord's work.
2. Ministry is the duty of not only men but also of women. A Christian woman is just as responsible to serve the Lord as is a Christian man. In the Bible many women served their responsibility to the Lord. They were involved especially in such general services as household ministries and caring for people's physical needs (Luke 4:39 and 8:3), but were not exempt from special ministries. The late Henrietta Mears sponsored a ministry to college-aged youth in a large church. Her ministry to them inspired dozens of young people to give their lives to serve the Lord. In addition, Ms. Mears founded a Sunday school literature publishing company that became one of the largest Christian publishers.
3. Ministries include part-time and volunteer services as well as full-time vocations. For instance, you don't have to become a

missionary to share Christ with non-Christians. Ken Norem was a welder by trade, but he devoted certain evenings of the week to visiting homes in his community for the Church. Because of Ken's gospel proclamations, many people repented and joined the Body of Christ.

4. Ministry is both church-related and community-centered activities. Some extra-church ministries are more significant than some church activities. For example, singing in a church choir is a relatively minor role, while directing a rescue mission on skid row is a major one.
5. A ministry need not be religious in nature. It may have an essentially secular nature and still be used as a channel of ministry. Missionary doctors heal bodies medically, and in turn have the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. The work of a church custodian is essential for the efficient functioning of Sunday school classes. We minister to everyone through the example of our honorable lives and friendly attitudes.

Can we change this? Nobody under the age of 55 says this.



| Functions in Ministry



Answer these questions.

1.11 What is the *restrictive* meaning of ministry? (Explain fully.) _____

1.12 What is the *inclusive* meaning of ministry? (Explain fully.) _____

Complete this chart.

| not only... | but also... |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Persons in Ministries | |

1.13 Professional clergy _____

1.14 Christian leaders _____


1.15 Men _____

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Functions in Ministries | |
|--------------------------------|--|

1.16 Church-related _____

1.17 Full-time vocations _____

1.18 Of a religious nature _____

 **Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test.** The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.



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