

Redeemer Presbyterian Church
“Ministries of Mercy- The Call of the Jericho Road”
(A study of the book by Timothy J. Keller, P&R Publishing, 1997.)

Session XIII.
Managing Your Ministry

“To maintain and build a mercy ministry, we must learn to plan and coordinate.” (Keller, p. 194)

Four basic reasons why mercy “stalls” (from Session XII)

- I. Failure to build bridges to needy people
 - Churches tend to be isolated from needy people, perhaps to the extent that they believe there are no needy people in the area
- II. Reacting to the needs of a few people instead of setting positive plans
 - Setting a vision is important. Otherwise the energies of the church can be drained by the needs of a few people
- III. Failure to recruit others to share the ministry
 - It is crucial to work with other like-minded churches
- IV. Failure to develop a vision for community transformation (see session XII)

I. Building Bridges for Outreach

A. Community Involvement

- Identify each member who is involved in service agencies
- Identify nurses, doctors, social workers, child care workers, nursing home employees- ***all these have contacts with the needy!***
- Encourage members of the church to learn about areas of need through volunteering with secular helping agencies in the local community

B. STEP (Strategies To Elevate People)

- this organization links an upper middle-class church (with many resources) with a church which has many needs
- In this system, those who are helped are under the authority of a church (higher level of accountability for those receiving mercy)
- Ultimately these two churches can work together to reach nonbelievers in the community

C. SOS (Strategy Of Service) Plan

- Set geographic boundaries for the ministry
- Set up a referral network within the boundaries
- Establish a volunteer system

D. Public Visibility and Listing

- Some churches are highly visible and will always have the needy coming to them for aid. Others may need to communicate their willingness to help through publicity
- This “bridge” to the community introduces the issue of dealing with the small percentage of people who may show up for help who are needy through sloth. Counteraction measures:
 - *Minimal Screening* should be done. Check to see if this person is “hitting up” other mercy ministries in town

- *Meet the need personally.* Not just a handout! Sit down and talk with the recipient of the mercy.
- *Give aid through a body so that no one person appears to be the source of assistance.* (provides protection from harassment)
- *Give help “in kind” rather than cash gifts*
- *Remember that there should be few “strings attached” initially*
- *Close the loop.* Visit the individual later; share the gospel.

II. Planning and Goal Setting

A. Evaluate present ministries

- Determine how many dimensions of mercy ministry your church is involved in and ask these questions:
 - What target groups are being served by this ministry?
 - What needs are being addressed?
 - How many people are being served?
 - How much direct assistance is being distributed?
 - How many volunteer hours of service are being rendered?
 - How effective is the ministry in reaching its goals?

B. Assess Community Needs

- Repeat a community survey at set periods and look for needs that can best be met through reform, advocacy, and community transformation

C. Build a Vision Statement

- state your objectives: We want to bring about...
- list blocks and opportunities
- list goals and action steps

III. Supervising and Recruiting Volunteers; Partnering with Like-Minded Churches

A. Recruiting

- Recruit to orientation, not to immediate performance
- Recruit to a team, not to a job
- Recruit to a specific time frame, not to an indefinite duty
- Appeal to gifts and calling; not to guilt!

B. Orienting

- Clear list of tasks- hours, duties, etc.
- list of resources and contacts
- clear picture of how this work fits into the overall purpose and vision

C. Assigning

- Clarify the level of authority for each task
- Personalize the job description
- Set terminal dates
- Get a verbal commitment from the volunteer

D. Supervising

- Set times for routine checking and communication through phone calls, personal contacts, and reports
- A more extensive assessment should be made regularly, asking:
 - What are your current duties and does that match your original job description?
 - What do you need from me or the church to do your job?
 - What have been your achievements?
 - Where are your greatest improvements?
 - What are your goals for the next time period?
 - What resources will you need to fill the goals?

E. Terminating

- Give an expression of recognition and appreciation
- Debrief; allow for expression of criticisms and frustrations
- Apologize if necessary, reconcile; seek to learn from the experience.

F. Networking with other congregations

- Presbytery-wide diaconal association?
- Other associations of like-minded churches
- Begin with a detailed grasp of the communities' needs

For further reflection and study:

1. What might some of the possibilities be for a STEP-type involvement for Redeemer?
2. What are some of the groups of “service and helping” professionals at Redeemer who have regular contact with the needy?
3. What will be the visibility factor of a building on our lot at Bateman Bridge and 811?

Note: All of these study notes are drawn from *Ministries of Mercy- The Call of the Jericho Road*, written by Timothy J. Keller. P&R Publishing, Second edition 1997. (available on Amazon.com; also on cvbbs.com , the Cumberland Valley Bible Book Service)

Mark **August 27** on your calendars! Two deacons from Covenant PCA (Harrisonburg) will be with us to reflect on their experiences in mercy ministry.