

Team Ministry 02 The Individual Team Member

What qualities must a team member have in order to minister effectively?

We will look at five qualities an effective minister of the Gospel must have, regardless of ministry call or function. Everyone who takes part in ministry serves at the pleasure of God and by the grace of God. Jesus made this when Jesus said,

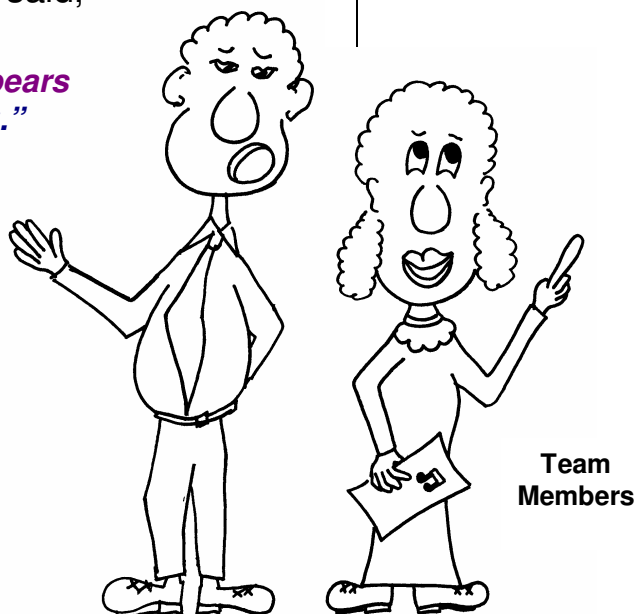
(John 15:5 NKJV) "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Five Qualities of an Effective Minister

1. Right Motivations
2. Right Heart
3. Right Spirit
4. Right Character
5. Right Anointing

Our
Responsibility

God's
Responsibility



We must take individual responsibility to maintain the first four of these qualities shown, above. Nobody is responsible to do so for us. The process is entirely internal within us. God will provide people in leadership to instruct and nurture us in these areas, but there is no escaping the personal accountability that goes with the ministry. Ultimately, we will individually stand before the Lord and account for our own actions.

The fifth quality, in the list given above, is "the right anointing." It is completely the Lord's responsibility. He gives it through the Holy Spirit, as He wills.

1. Right Motivations

A motive may be defined as, *"An emotion or desire that causes us to act... or an incentive or inducement that promises certain rewards for our actions."*

Motives may be selfish or selfless. In ministry, they ought to always be selfless, with an anticipation of fulfilling God's plans and building His kingdom. In order to guarantee this, we ought to have the following intentions:

First Intention: to please God

(2 Corinthians 5:7-10 NKJV) "For we walk by faith, not by sight. {8} We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. {9} Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. {10} For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

(1 Thessalonians 2:4 NLT) "For we speak as messengers who have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He is the one who examines the motives of our hearts."

(1 Thessalonians 4:1 NKJV) "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;"

Second Intention: To bless People (in or out of church)

(Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. {15} Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. {16} Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Third Intention: To bear Significant and Lasting Fruit

In the Parable of the Soils (Luke 8:4-15), Jesus speaks of the "good ground." This represents people who received the Word, kept it properly within their hearts, and as a result, "bear fruit with patience."

"But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

(New Living Translation of Verse 15:
"...steadily produce a huge harvest."

Our natural inclination is to enjoy what we are called and gifted in. Not everything we decide to do is done with the express purpose of building God’s kingdom or bearing fruit. Sometimes we just feel like doing it! That is fine with the Lord. God uses many ways of getting people to the place where we can discover what we can do to please God, to bless people with our ministry, and to bear significant and lasting fruit!

Remember - preaching, teaching, choir and other ministries are ways God publicly touches groups of people with His presence and His message. Your public ministry has the greatest potential to influence masses of people. It produces a life-changing awareness that the God of this universe is calling out to them and drawing them to His side.

2. Right Hearts (As Individuals and Team Members)

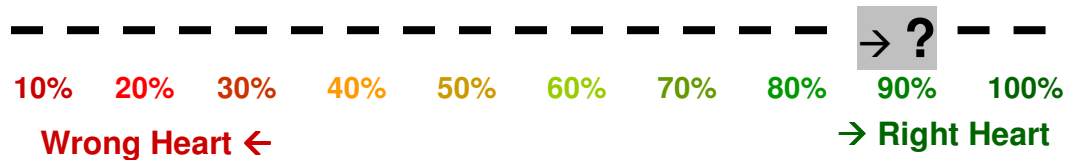
Our motivations can only be successful if we have the hearts to back them up. Let’s do a heart check-up. Do our hearts fit these descriptions?

(Heart Check Time)

- **Hard Hearts**
 - **Stubborn Hearts**
 - **Prideful Hearts**
 - **Unloving, Uncaring Hearts**
- ←

It is a question of percentages, not absolutes!
Sanctification moves the marker! →

- **Soft Hearts**
 - **Teachable Hearts**
 - **Humble Hearts**
 - **Loving, Caring Hearts**
-



Where would you rate yourself?

Be honest about your place on the scale, above. It will challenge you. The obvious follow-up question is...

“How can I slide the marker to the right?”

- ? Is your heart soft and pliable before the Lord... and before others?
- ? Are you motivated by a selflessness that speaks of giving of yourself?
- ? Do you approach your ministry with serious humility?
- ? Are you willing to rejoice when someone else gets the pulpit? In any publicly performing ministry, pride is our worst enemy.
- ? Are you teachable - willing to be led and taught, willing to change?
- ? Are you loving and caring toward others, both in public and out?
- ? Are you aware of the eternal consequences of your words?

3. Right Spirits (As Individuals and Team Members)

Always remember, we are not ministering in the world's way. Our words and actions will have connections to contemporary life, but we should never speak or act out of a spirit that belongs to the world.

All ministries exist in a context of communication. We ought to try to communicate their messages and methods with express guidance from the Holy Spirit. As we communicate, the forces behind our words must be godly spiritual forces. We should understand the process in which we communicate first to God and then to others. To do this requires gentle and peaceable spirits... and serving, giving spirits. These must permeate the team! Consider the following three questions.

Is your spirit gentle?

To be gentle means to be aware that your words and your actions (and even your inactions) in ministry affect everyone

around you. To be gentle means that you are sensitive and careful with your presence as it projects itself among others.

Effective and cohesive team ministry depends upon unity, which defines itself by agape love (God's kind of love). One of agape love's defining characteristics is gentleness (also a fruit of the Spirit). The Apostle Paul encouraged the church at Thessalonica with these words:

(1 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) "But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children."

Our attitudes toward each other in the ministry team ought to be governed by a spirit of gentleness. We ought to ask ourselves whether we have tender hearts toward each other.

Is your spirit peaceable?

(Matthew 5:9 (NKJV) "Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons (or daughters) of God."

Is yours a giving spirit?

(Matthew 10:8 (NKJV) "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

(2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJV) "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

These are all heart issues. We answer these three questions, not in absolutes, but as percentages (None of us is perfect). The key issue is knowing how we can slide our markers to the right - how we can be more like Jesus. (See the previous "Heart Check Time" chart, again.)

4. Right Character (Displayed prominently in Team Activities)

Consider the following three questions.

Is your character Honorable?

(1 Peter 2:11-12 NKJV) "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, {12} having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that

when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."

The Greek word for "good," (*kalos*) in 1 Peter 2:12 is layered with shades of meaning. It signifies works that reflect a person's character. It means to be *virtuous, honest, well meaning, beautiful, virtuous, honest, worthy* and **honorable**.

Does your character reflect Honesty?

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines "honest" in this way:
*"Free from fraud or deception; **GENUINE, REAL ...making stops at stop signs... creditable, praiseworthy, Marked by integrity, innocent, simple.**"*

God is always with you. He sees everything you do. Others will make judgments about our character, but the primary, and most significant opinion will always be God's. If our character as individuals meets with God's approval, it will meet with the approval of others. The validity of our ministry will depend on how people judge the character of the one doing the ministry.

Is your character Uncompromising?

We all have heroes. Who are yours? Are they like Daniel, who would not compromise or defile himself (**Daniel 1:8**)? Are they people like Joseph, who would (1) not give up his integrity with sinful opportunities, (2) who would not take advantage of his position... or (3) give up on his walk with God in the face of adversity? Are your heroes people like Esther, who was willing to risk her life so that the people she belonged to and cared about could have peace and safety... or Ruth, who put herself in harms way, going out to glean among strangers in the field, to care for Naomi? Perhaps they're Peter and John, when threatened by the Pharisees, refused to keep silent about Jesus (Acts 4:19, 20).

I do not know the origin of the following story, but it speaks volumes about uncompromising character and commitment to Christ.

No Compromise

It was during the height of the cold war in Moscow. Russia was a godless place where religion was not tolerated. The consequences of being caught worshipping the Lord were imprisonment, perhaps including a long stay in Siberia. There was once a group of about twenty Russian Christians praying secretly behind locked doors. Suddenly, the lock on the door was shattered and four Russian soldiers burst in, pointing their automatic rifles at the terrified group of believers. "We will give you thirty seconds to drop your Bibles, denounce Jesus and leave this place!"

About fifteen of them quickly did exactly what the soldiers demanded. They ran terrified from the building. Then the soldiers shut the door again and faced four or five frightened but determined believers, people who would not compromise their stand for Christ, even at the point of a gun!

The soldiers put down their weapons, smiled at the terrified believers and said, "We wanted to pray to Jesus, but we wanted to be among people who really were committed to Him... who would willingly die for Him, just as we would! You are the kind of people we desire to fellowship with. Please forgive us. Let us pray together."

5. Right Anointing

The anointing is simply the empowering presence of God, which He places on a person's life, words or actions, at a particular time for a particular purpose. It is given solely at God's discretion. It is unlimited in power because it originates from Him.

(Exodus 3:7-8a NKJV) "And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. {8} So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey..."

The Anointing: God Coming Down!

God exercised His omnipotence through a person (Moses), and a nation was set free. Without the anointing, neither Moses' efforts nor ours would be effectual. There would be extreme

limitations. With God's anointing, we can do all we are called to do, just as Moses did. This is because the anointing is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. If you speak with an anointing, it is because you speak by the Spirit of God from within you. If you minister to another with an anointing, it is God ministering by His Holy Spirit, through you.

Spiritual Math:

Right Motivations + Heart + Spirit + Character + Anointing
= Success, Victory, Significance and Satisfaction

Five Purposes for the Anointing

First Purpose **To Enable and Empower us to Destroy the Works of the Devil**

When the anointing is in operation, it is the Lord at work in us.

(John 10:10 NKJV) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

(1 John 3:8b NKJV) "...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Luke 4:18-19 NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; {19} To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." - (See also - Isaiah, Chapter 61)

Second Purpose **To evangelize the world**

Third Purpose **To effectively operate in the gifts of the Spirit and bring God's love and healing to the broken hearted**

Fourth Purpose **To equip us with boldness to testify of the liberty we have in Christ**

Fifth Purpose **To heal the sick and the afflicted**

A Minister's Prayer

*Let my footprints be places of blessing.
Let my shadows be places of healing.
Let my words be quick with life.
Let my songs be sung with love.*

*Write upon the tablets of my heart,
With the finger of God.
And let it be readable to all.
Let my life say, this is the only way
Walk in it.*

*Whisper things to me O Lord,
I'll receive them.
I'll believe them.
I'll reflect them.
I'll become them.*

*When I'm gone from this earth at the time
of your choice,
Let the silence that stands in the place of
my voice,
Resonate a cry that cannot be stilled,
A light that cannot be dimmed,
An image that cannot be forgotten.*

*Let others remember one who sang and
preached and taught
With a voice like many waters,
With a countenance like the sun,
Shining in the strength of its image,
In some small way, an image like the Son.*

*Stay on fire for Jesus! May the Lord bless you and may you
bear bountiful fruit for His kingdom.*

Dr. Bob Abramson