



Ministering To The Lord

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

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“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1-3).

Following the death of Herod and return of Saul to Antioch, the work of God continued to prosper. This chapter opens with a list of key prophets and teachers at the Antioch church that included:

- 1) Barnabas
- 2) Simeon (that was called Niger)
- 3) Lucious of Cyrene, and
- 4) Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.

These all unitedly devoted their time to ministering to the Lord along with fasting. In the Biblical context as used here, to minister is for someone to attend to the needs of others. On this occasion, the focus of their ministration unto the Lord included prayer and fasting, and possibly along with other things.

Despite their high positions and respectable ranks in the church, they humbly came together in corporate prayers. There is power in united prayers to bring down the commanded blessings of God (Psalms 133; Matthew 18:18-20).

As evident in their experiences within this scripture, prayer is not a one way monologue from man to God but a two-way intimate relationship between both. As they prayed to God, the Holy Spirit spoke to them.

When we talk to God (in prayer), it should not be a surprise to hear God speak back to us. This calls for effective listening on our part. As they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Spirit spoke and gave them directions for their next step in Minis-

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try. God has the plan for he next step of your life and Ministry. Had they not listened, they would not have heard the voice of the Holy Spirit. Hearing and obeying God’s plan, leads to divine approval, blessings and progress.

Note the following:

- 1) The Holy Spirit called for the separation of Paul and Barnabas for the work “whereunto I have called them” (vs 2). The Holy Spirit did not commission all of them for the missionary work, selected those needed for it. God still select people today, who are ready for the work He has assigned to them. Our responsibility is to carefully discern the voice of the Holy Spirit and promptly respond to His biddings.
- 2) The rest of the leaders were not jealous that the Holy Spirit only called Saul and Barnabas (not them) to be commissioned for missionary work. Rather they co-operated with the Holy Spirit and supported the called by praying for them, laying hands on them and sending them away on their missionary journey.
- 3) Both Saul and Barnabas, along with these other leaders all obeyed the Holy Spirit. That is how it ought to be in our lives today.

In times like these, we all need to seriously devote our attention to effectively ministering to the Lord, rather than being lost in myriads of mechanical / ritualistic religious activities, that are devoid of true relationship with God. It is great to be busy with various activities. However, being busy should not replace our need for intimacy with God.

Peter’s admonition is for all of us “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (I Peter 4:7). It is the right time to sober up to communing with God.