

Ryan Leigh McClelland

Philosophy of Ministry

Husband//

Father//

Follower//

Pastor//

Backpacker//

Musician//

Educator//

Student//

Cook//

Philosopher//

We have a pet bunny//

Foursquare Licensed Minister - June 2016

Foursquare Ordained Minister- Oct 2018

Commissioned Church of God of Anderson Pastor - Aug 2019

Ordained Church of God of Anderson Pastor - East Oct 2024

Thank you for taking a moment to review my philosophy of ministry. The intent of this document is to help articulate my personal-biblical understanding of the ministry God has called me live out. I began developing this document in 2014 and have annually reviewed and updated the content to accurately reflect my understanding of the ministry God has placed me in.

Wirth more than ten years in vocational full-time church work, I've noticed definitions are in many cases variable, and change from place to place. For this philosophy to express my intent, I must share with the readers how I used specific words.

What is a ***leader?***

A leader is an individual responsible for *practical* and *spiritual* functions within a ministry and helps intentionally care for and train the volunteers within the ministry.

(One bit I found agreeable during my leadership studies was from a book called "Leadership-5th Edition" by Dr. Northhouse. It describes all definitions of leadership will include three principles 1) **Followers** (the plurality of that is paramount) 2) **Influence** (the ability to move a team a direction) 3) **Shared vision** (everyone knows what we're working for, and towards)

What is a ***leader in training?***

A leader in training is an individual learning from a leader how to run functional components of the ministry while learning how to provide care to volunteers.

What is ***discipleship?***

Discipleship is intentionally teaching through an ongoing relationship the message of obedience from scripture.

4) What is ***ministry?***

An activity that creates opportunities to share, express and live out Christian faith and values. (Great Commission)

Ministry Is a Lifestyle

Ministry is a lifestyle and is something that moves through every component of a person's life. The reflection of Christ is to be visible in every space within a Christ follower's existence; family, friends, marriage, parenting, and more. *Following* is a verb and *something a Christian does* in all ministries as they move towards Jesus. Although ministry may be a function that produces an income for some, ministry is not a job, ministry is part of the identity of being a Christian and not something that concludes at the end of a day. *I believe all Christians have the same core ministry calling: Go make disciples and love others.*

Matthew 28 charges all Christians with a common goal, "...go and make disciples". The manifestations of service within any believer's ministry should be furthering this commandment. My philosophy of ministry is burdened by the desire to help others activate their ministries. My expression of Matthew 28 is played out by helping believers find and use their gifts and helping nonbelievers discover the Lord and activating their core ministry and then vocational ministry.

What ministry is not - Being kind, nice, offering to pray for, offering to help someone or a group are *components* to a ministry but individually they are simply Christian behaviors and lack the completeness for something to be a "ministry". All Jesus led ministries will bear fruit and all ministries could and likely should have a mission and vision.

Alignment Through Community

I believe alignment with an individual's call to ministry happens most often through community. It's likely people will not only align and begin their ministry in community but they'll grow their ministry, restore and heal from broken or previous life struggles through healthy relationships in community.

Individual 1-on-1 relationships make the largest impact. Mentorship and friendship help develop and mature individuals to producing thriving and impacting ministries.

Community can happen anywhere and isn't excluded to a building or place.

Fellowship, community and mentorship create unique opportunities for meaningful

accountability, opportunities to develop servant leadership skills, theological understanding and application along with a host of other life transforming experiences.

Multiple expressions of community provide multiple utilities. Along side with the powerful 1-on-1 relationships, groups of 4, (akin to Jesus and His three, Peter, James, and John) are vital to a Christian community. Additional groups of around 12, also biblically modeled, then groups of 50, then up to 150. Each serving its purpose.

How to manage community sizes?- I believe churches should aim to hire One Full-Time pastor for every 100-125 people in the church. (Robert Dunbar, an anthropologist explains these groups psychologically and biblically and I've adopted, applied, and seen success with his biblically based understandings of communities, their critical functions, and their sizes)

Private Disciplines

I believe leading, growing and developing others can be accomplished most effectively through an individual and internalized focus on a developing prayer life, devotion and generosity. The demonstrations of outward ministry are usually revealing about what is happening internally within the life of that person.

Outward ministry in my mind is how we treat serving staff at a restaurant, or a customer representative over the phone or behind a counter, how one controls themselves at social gatherings, what others have to say about them, what's the body of content of their social content online etcetera? These provide insight on private disciplines for ourselves and for others . (1st Timothy 3:1-7)

***See Ryan McClelland's Code of Ethics Document**

Founded In The Word

The Bible is the infallible word of God. Through our limited capacities, God reveals to us His infinite wisdom even when we're lacking, the Holy Spirit can make us aware of powerful truths in scripture when needed. Through study and investigation of scripture and healthy community with others in God's word, I believe God's plan can be discovered for individuals, groups, churches and the world.

Theological Alignment

While there can be robust and broad citizenships into God's kingdom, I believe that even though I may call someone brother, they may not or I may not want to practice some approaches to theology. A few specific examples are ones subscription to soteriology. If individuals within a community don't share the same biblical approach to how one comes to know the Lord and by what means, the community can easily become divided, confused, and is at risk for offense and confrontation. The varying camps of divine determinism compared to libertarian free will christian living is a particular point of alignment. Another key element to align around is Imago Dei. How did God make us, what are our roles in the world, the kingdom, the home, and in the church. Can and how should or would a man or women teach, share, preach, disciple, needs to be clearly defined as this too will shape the very nature of community. Other topics such as eschatology, creation account, sexuality are vital to discuss and understand where the community and it's leaders are on these issues to avoid what would be unnecessary offense and conflict from the beginning. All of these issues and more are important, yet some in some contexts prioritize themselves differently. Leadership must have sensitivity towards this, while I believe at all possible to be appealing to unity in Jesus, gathering in fellowship, breaking of bread in hospitality, and submitting to one another in love.

The People Are The Church

It is a simple truth from the inception of the Church and the way the Church looks today has many important differences. The Church and the people of it should be regarded from the community as essential and in its absence, the community would recognize a void. The contributions to society presented by the Church today should attract the lost and mobilize the saved to reap the harvest. I believe all Churches share the vision of growing God's Kingdom, the words they use to convey that change. Also, I believe that the mission of each church is dynamic and God creates multiple styles of churches, cultures and methodologies for reaching out to all groups and demographics of people.

A Unique Story

Stories are something we can point to as a way of meaningful communication for all documented history throughout all cultures and civilizations. I believe we all have a story to share and that God gives each of us a powerful experience that impacted our lives. **Sharing** our stories, **developing** our story and **preparing** our story is a responsibility of all Christians. Even though we may not have a gift of evangelism, all believers have a story intended to be shared that shines a light on how God has moved through their life. Helping others see and understand their story is one of the simplest ways of helping people begin their ministry.

Creativity

God is the creator, ultimately clever and resourceful beyond our understanding. We simply cannot comprehend how some things are universally understood like music, color, tone, and expression. I believe God has provided everyone with a “painters pallet” and artist kit to honor him through absolutely any medium. We were created to create and there is no such thing as an uncreative believer in Christ. Although our ability to create may not use traditional creative vessels like graphics design, painting, drawing, musicianship etc, we are all gifted with being creative in our lives and in countless ways. This too, is an area I believe Christians can endlessly explore and discover creative mechanisms and outlets to honor God. Parenting, marriage, communication, idea formation, entertaining, finances, science, and so on.

Meaningful and Valuable Lives

Being a Christian automatically manifests a priceless value and significance to our existence. *There is no more of an important task than to share Christs love with others (significance) and no more of a secure existence than being saved by His grace (security).* With this combination of significance and security I believe all Christians should have humility visible in their living and a confidence in their existence. Each follower of Christ has a precious responsibility to steward the resources they’ve been entrusted with companioned with the expectation to use these resources for His good.