

Lesson 7: The Church's Role in Building God's Kingdom

Part 1: Introduction

Read Ephesians 1:22-23.

- What is the role of the church?

Read Ephesians 3:10.

- What is God using to make known His wisdom?

What would happen if your church had to close down? Would the non-Christians in your community complain? Why or why not?

Part 2: Equipping Individuals

Read Ephesians 2:10.

- What were we saved to do?
- Are all people that are saved to be doing good work or only some?
- Is everyone in your church doing good work?

Read Matthew 25:14-30 - the Parable of the Talents.

- As you read this parable, do you think that it indicates that there are any Christians that don't need to be using their talents to build God's Kingdom?

Are all Christians in your church using their talents fully?

- How can we help more people to be using their talents fully to build God's Kingdom?

Read Ephesians 4:11-12.

- What is the role of leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers)?

- In many churches they say that 10% of the people do 90% of the work. Is that true in your church? How can we change it?
- How can we be better at building up others, so they are able to do works of service?

Story from Indonesia

Often it is said that those who learn the most and grow the most are those who are serving others. In Indonesia there were some missionaries working with youth. Although the missionaries were teaching the youth weekly, they became frustrated by how weak the Christians were and how slowly they were growing. They decided the youth needed to start serving, so they instituted a new rule that only those involved in some service role were allowed to attend the weekly training. Most of the youth got involved in various activities. They did everything from reaching out to a poor family in their community to tutoring poor children to helping in the children's ministry. Within a few months the missionaries noticed the youth had really started to mature in their faith. Now they knew they needed to read their Bibles and pray. They realised they needed to trust God to help them to be able to really help others.

- What happened in this story?
- What were some of the ways the youth started to serve?
- Have you seen people mature as they have started to be more involved in serving through the church?
- Why do you think people mature as they start to serve?
- What is the main point or the lesson we can learn from this story?

Part 3: Transforming Families

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ephesians 5:25-33

- Why is equipping family important?
- What are some ways the church can support families to grow stronger?

Part 4: Transforming Communities

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the verses and answer the following questions:

- Matthew 20:28 - Why did Jesus come?
- Philippians 2:4-9 - How does Paul describe Jesus?
- James 1:27 - What type of religion is pleasing to God?
- Mark 12:31 - What does God command us to do?

Read the stories

The Community School

Kagishu, a shanty town slum with homes made from discarded sheet metal and broken wood, had a fifteen-member church. This church received an invitation to attend a wholistic ministry training conference and selected Meshack, a 21-year-old member, to attend. Meshack returned with a new vision: 'I learned that obeying Jesus is not optional!' So Meshack, an elder named Dismus, the pastor, and the pastor's wife prayed, asking God for a project to demonstrate the love of God to their community. The answer came: begin a primary school for children in the church.

Immediately they began talking to church members who had children but could not afford the small fee for public school. Several agreed to send their children to this new 'school.' With no training, Meshack, the pastor, and the pastor's wife began teaching thirteen children, ages six to twelve, in the one-room church with no desks, books, or equipment. Meshack's first salary came during the seventh month—one US dollar paid by fees and offerings from children's parents.

Meschack and Dismus invited neighbourhood children, and the school grew. Soon there were forty-five students of varying ages in one room. A second teacher volunteered by the sixth month, and a third by the eighth month. With 100 students, the teachers stood back-to-back in the middle of the room, facing their classes. As neighbours moved out, the school gained more space. By the time the school was two years old, it had two buildings with more than ten rooms that could also be used for church on Sunday.

The next year the church bought a piece of land in nearby Kawangware, and built a permanent building, and relocated. In its sixth year there were seventeen paid teachers, five non-teaching staff and 445 children.

This is only the beginning of the story for the community, the school, and the church. As a direct result of this effort there is a new secondary school in a nearby village with ten staff and sixty students. Another church started a daycare for twenty children whose mothers

must work. The original church fellowship grew into a congregation of sixty members and has planted another church of more than forty members. Each of these churches has produced two new churches in different areas.

Six years after the obedient sacrifice of a very small church and its members, there is a large visible effect in the communities and churches in this area. In fact, transformation in Kagishu was verified as community members suggested renaming the community from Kagishu (which means "the knife") to Ruita (which means "removing something dangerous").

- What happened in this story?
- How big was the church at first?
- What was the impact of their actions?

Harvesting the crops

In one village it was the tradition when the crops were harvested that the community members would gather together to help in each other's fields. However, the person whose field was being harvested had to provide a large meal and drinks for each of the days the community members were helping with the harvest. Unfortunately, the cost of the meal meant that often the landowner would make very little profit from their harvest.

The church decided that, as an Act of Love, they would help some of the poorest families in the community to harvest their land without requiring anything in the way of payment. Instead they would bring their own food to eat at lunchtime. As other community members started to see the way the church was serving the poor, they decided they should also help one another without requiring a large meal and drinks.

Nowadays everyone helps each other to harvest their crops. No one has to provide any alcohol or food. The profit the farmers make from their land has increased significantly and, as a result, they now have enough to eat for the whole year.

- What did the church do to help in this community?
- What was the impact? What changes did it make to the whole community?