

A photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, golden-brown grass or wheat. In the middle ground, a dark brown barn is visible on the right, and a tall, slender windmill stands in the center. The background shows a flat horizon under a clear, light blue sky.

# **Vision for Ministry**

## **Leader's Manual**

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### Leader's Manual

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## **Notes for Leaders**

Thank you for offering to run a Vision for Ministry meeting. These notes are designed to assist you in leading a meeting in your church or group. The notes are not intended to serve as a full manuscript for the various sessions but rather as a guide to help you in presenting the material.

### **Aim**

The aim of the meeting is to assist your members in thinking through whether they should consider full or part time vocational ministry. Obviously, this is not the sort of decision people will make in a couple of hours! However, our prayer is that these meetings may help and encourage your members in this decision making process.

### **Suggested Evening Programme**

7:30 Introduction & Bible Study  
8:00 Gospel Ministry – Some Practicalities  
8:30 Testimony  
8:45 Personal Reflection  
9:00 Sharing in Small Groups  
9:20 Prayer  
9:35 Conclusion and Feedback  
9:45 Finish

You are free to use this programme or follow your own format. If an evening is not suitable you may wish to run the meeting at another time during the week.

### **Participant's Manual**

A participant's manual has also been produced which you will need to photocopy and distribute. Participants will also need a Bible and a pen.

### **Response Form**

The participant's manual contains a response form. This gives people an opportunity to respond to the evening and give some feedback.

There is a great need for more workers to go out in God's harvest field. Our prayer is that the Vision for Ministry meetings may be used by God to encourage Christians towards this end.

## **Vision for Ministry – Leader’s Manual**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to our Vision for Ministry meeting. Similar meetings are being held in churches all over Australia as a part of the Vision for Ministry initiative.

The purpose of our time together is to help you think through whether you should be seriously considering vocational ministry.

Of course, all Christians are called to a life time of ministry. However, there is a great need for men and women who are willing to commit all or a part of their working week to some form of vocational gospel ministry.

#### **Programme**

Briefly outline the programme for the evening.

### **Bible Study – Matthew 9:35-38**

If you have a large group of people you may wish to break up into smaller groups to do the Bible study.

Read Matthew 9:35-38. What is the context of this passage in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ ministry? What are some of the events leading up to the passage in chapters 8 and 9?

Verse 35 gives a summary of Jesus’ ministry. What are the key features of his ministry?

In verse 36, what is Jesus’ response to the crowds? Why does he use the phrase “like sheep without a shepherd” to describe their condition (cf Matt 2:6; Jn 10:11-18)?

What is our response to the “crowds” of people around us? Do we see them as being harassed and helpless?

In verse 37 when Jesus looks at the “harassed and helpless” crowds he doesn’t despair. Rather he sees an abundant and plentiful spiritual harvest. If the harvest is ready and waiting, what is the thing that is needed? You may also like to read Romans 10:12-15.

What does this say about God’s role and our role in sharing the gospel with people?

In verse 38 what are we called to do?

Immediately following this passage in chapter 10 what happens?

What is your response to this passage? What are you challenged to do as a result?

## **Gospel Ministry – Some Practicalities**

The following notes are not meant to serve as a full talk manuscript for this section, but rather to serve as a guide in helping you to present the material. Give people the opportunity to ask questions and make comments along the way.

### **Introduction**

- All Christians are called to a life time of ministry. Peter speaks of the priesthood of all believers (cf 1 Pet 2:9-12).
- However, there is a real need for **vocational** gospel workers who can devote a significant amount of their time and energy to gospel ministry.
- Note, that there are no “second class Christians” - vocational gospel workers are no more important than other Christians (cf body of Christ analogy in 1 Cor 12).

### **The Need**

- Just as in Jesus’ day, there is still a massive need for gospel workers to go out into God’s harvest field.
- In Australia, only about 5-10% of people regularly attend a Protestant church.
- Globally, there are hundreds of millions of people who have no real Christian witness in their midst.

### **The Options**

- There are many options for vocational ministry.
- Time - Full-time or part-time.
- Support - Paid or self-supporting (ie tent making).
- Role - Various roles eg evangelist, church planter, pastor/teacher, administration roles etc.
- Setting - Local church, para-church ministry, missionary organisation, denominational organisation. You may even want to establish your own organisation.

### **The Requirements**

- Character
  - There are a number of passages relating to the importance of Christian character for people involved in Christian ministry - especially those involved in leadership and teaching roles (eg 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

- Gifts
  - It is important that you exhibit some gifts in the area of ministry you want to focus on (cf Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 4:10-11).
  - There are two dangers. One is to overestimate your gifts and abilities (cf Rom 12:3 - don't think of too highly of yourself). The other is to underestimate your gifts and to be afraid to use them (cf 2 Tim 1:6-7 - Paul encourages Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God...").
  - Prayer and the wise counsel of other godly Christians are vital.
  - Having said all this, it is important to remember that you can grow and develop their gifts along the way. It is a good idea to have a go at a number of different ministries to find out where your gifts may lie.
- Availability
  - This is a key practical consideration.
  - You may have commitments which could limit your current availability eg a parent caring for young children, a carer looking after an elderly or disabled family member, a worker who needs to honour a contract they have entered into.
  - This doesn't mean that you can't look at some form of vocational ministry in the future.

## **Training**

- Training is very important (cf 1 Tim 4:7-8; 2 Tim 3:14-17).
- Areas of Training
  - Personal character and godliness - ministry is as much about who you are as about what you do (cf 1 Tim 4:7-8).
  - Biblical knowledge and theology - we need to be able to faithfully communicate God's word. Also, the Bible sets the priorities for ministry and guides us in how to go about it (cf 2 Tim 3:14-17). Our theology has a big impact on the way we do ministry.
  - Gifts and skills - gifts are given to us by God (1 Cor 12:7). However, we need to actively develop these gifts (cf 1 Cor 14:1; 2 Tim 1:6-7).
- Training Options
  - Local church - it is important that church leaders are active in training people in their congregation in ministry (which takes time) and giving them opportunities to do ministry (which involves risk). See Eph 4:11-13.
  - Para-church ministries eg beach mission, youth camps etc.
  - Missionary organisations eg short and medium term mission trips.

- Theological/Bible college - can study full or part-time. The level of training you choose will depend on the ministry you are training for and on other factors such as denominational requirements etc.

In choosing a college make sure that:-

- The college views the Bible as God's word and faithfully teaches the Bible in the courses that it offers.
- The college offers courses that are relevant to the particular area of ministry you are interested in.

### **Where to From Here**

- It is important for Christians to be open to the option of some form of vocational ministry.
- There are a number of things you can do to work out whether vocational ministry is where you should be headed.
  - Pray and speak to other Christians.
  - Read the Bible - especially the New Testament. As you read note down what the Bible says about ministry.
  - Get involved in ministry. Try some ministries that you have never tried before.
  - Explore options for further training. Attend some Bible college open days.
  - Speak to someone from a missionary organisation or para-church ministry about options for ministry.
  - Attend a conference on ministry. This may be one run by your denomination or by a Bible college or by a ministry training organisation.
  - Read books on ministry. Biographies are especially inspiring and helpful.
  - Pray some more!

### **Testimony**

Share with the group how you came to the decision to enter into vocational ministry. Alternatively, you might ask one of your other staff members to share their story.

## **Personal Reflection**

Spend about fifteen minutes by yourself praying and reflecting on what we have covered so far. If you are not already involved in vocational ministry, honestly ask yourself before God whether it is an option for you. Jot down any thoughts that you have.

## **Small Groups**

Break up into small groups of about 3 or 4, ideally with people who know you. Spend about twenty minutes sharing some of your thoughts from the personal reflection time with one another. Then spend about fifteen minutes praying for one another and the things you have discussed.

## **Conclusion and Feedback**

Ask people to fill in the feedback sheets. Once people have finished thank people for attending and close in prayer.