

DEVOTION TO THE LORD AND HIS MINISTRY
A THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY
Acts 20:17-38

Introduction: Four times in the New Testament Paul says “*follow me*” (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:19). In his emotional farewell address at Miletus, Paul called on the Ephesian elders to continue his pattern of ministry. Paul intentionally developed men and delegated responsibility to them. His message to them is the only sermon to believers in the book of Acts. This highlight passage serves as a model for biblical ministry then and now. No other passage so clearly and concisely explains the model of New Testament church ministry.

I. The Leader’s _____ (17-19)

- A. Humble spirit - “*servoing the Lord with all humility of mind*”
- B. Heroic spirit - “*with many tears, and temptations*”

Ministry must be carried out under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and conveyed with a deep sense of humility and determination.

II. The Leader’s _____ (20)

- A. Publicly - “*showed you, and taught you publicly*”
- B. Privately - “*and from house to house*”

Ministry must balance public proclamation and private confrontation.

III. The Leader’s _____ (19a, 21, 26, 27, 32)

- A. Evangelistic
 1. His ministry was comprehensive - “*testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks*” (cf. 19:10; 20:26)
 2. His message was complete - “*repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*” (20:19a, 27)
- B. Edifying - “*the word of his grace, which is able to build you up*”

Ministry must declare to every person in all places the Gospel message of repentance and faith, solemnly testifying of God's saving grace from coming judgment. Ministry builds believers through God's enabling Word.

IV. The Leader's _____ (22-25)

A. His commission (Acts 9:15; 22:15; 26:18-20)

B. His conflicts - "*bonds and afflictions*"

C. His continuation - "*finish my course with joy*"

Great Mission Statements of Paul (Rom. 1:14-16; I Cor. 10:33-11:1; II Cor. 5:20; Eph. 3:8; 6:19-20; Phil. 1:20, 21; Col. 1:27-29; I Tim. 1:16; II Tim. 1:11-12; II Tim. 4:7-8)

Ministry must go forward selflessly and joyfully in spite of obstacles and opposition.

V. The Leader's _____ (28-32)

A. Pastoral ministry - "*take heed...feed the church of God*"

B. Protective ministry - "*therefore watch*"

Ministry involves careful self-watch and flock-watch in light of the God-given responsibility of caring for that which belongs to God. Ministry includes significant warnings about false teachers while affirming God's Word with full confidence.

VI. The Leader's _____ (33-35)

A. Not getting - "*I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel*"

B. But giving - "*more blessed to give than to receive*"

Ministry must be carried out in the spirit of a selfless servant who is willing, if need be, to pay his own way to minister to others. Ministry demands personal involvement in people's lives, developing friendships and relationships with heart-felt concern and compassion.