

# **Syllabus**

## **Exploring Christian Ministry**

Location of the Course: WHITE STONE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

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### **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

- Feb 7 10-12am      1. The Ground of Christian Ministry**
- The Incarnate Word
  - The Written Word
  - The Preached Word
- Feb 14 10-12am      2. The Persons Involved in Christian Ministry**
- The Lord Who Speaks the Word
  - The Minister Who Has Heard the Word
  - The Persons Who Hear the Word Through the Minister
- Feb 21 10-12am      3. The Knowledge Required for Christian Ministry**
- Knowing Your God
  - Knowing Your Self
  - Knowing Your People
- Feb 28 10-12am      4. The Communication Skills Needed for Christian Ministry**
- Learning to Listen
  - Learning to Speak
  - Learning to Persuade
- March 7 10-12am      5. The Common Venues of Christian Ministry**
- The Minister as Worshiper
  - The Minister as Counselor
  - The Minister as Administrator
- March 14 10-12am      6. The Christian Ministry as Servanthood**
- The Servant Life
  - Sustaining the Servant Life
  - Persevering in the Servant Life

**Class grade will be pass/fail based on:**

- 1. Required attendance of 5 out of 6 classes**
- 2. Reading lectures (before the class - will help participation)**
- 3. Class participation**
- 4. Regular journal entries on readings (use "homework" questions to help provoke your thoughts)**

## **Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation**

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in every module in which one participates. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

## **Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration**

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module, you will be required to listen to lectures, read books and articles, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head through your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work faithfully to spend daily time in your journal. Many people confess this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an ‘ah-ha’ that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, and aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

## **Bibliography**

Gushee, David P., and Walter C. Jackson, eds. *Preparing for Christian Ministry: An Evangelical Approach*. Wheaton, IL: A Bridgepoint Book, 1996.

Oden, Thomas C. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1983.